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THE

HISTORY

OF

THE LIFE AND REIGN

OF

GEORGE THE FOURTH.

94012

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
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MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND REIGN

OF

GEORGE THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

1760—1764.

ACCESSION AND MARRIAGE OF GEORGE III. — BIRTH OF THE PRINCE OF WALES. — UNPOPULARITY AND CHARACTER OF THE KING. — MINISTRY AND RESIGNATION OF LORD BUTE.

THE life of a constitutional king of England is to be sought in the history of his counsels; and the heir apparent is virtually interdicted from a conspicuous share in either domestic politics or foreign war. But the character of George IV., at an early age, has the strong interest which arises from brilliant endowment and accomplishment combined, perhaps congenial, with the ardour and errors of the passions and of youth. His opening career fascinated the public gaze, whilst it divided the public opinion. His mature life connected itself by re-

markable incidents with the domestic annals of the nation. His regency, which may be regarded as a part of his reign, is signalised among memorable epochs, by the last act and surprising catastrophe of that grand and terrible spectacle of power, principles, intellect, and valour, which opened with the French revolution, and closed with the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte.

There was something auspicious in the period which immediately preceded his birth. The hopes of the Stuarts had become faint, if not extinct; and the house of Brunswick had just attained, for the first time, a complete ascendant. George I. was not without personal good qualities, but he continued a German princeling on the British throne—surrounded still by his petty Hanoverian satellites, and so ignorant even of the language of his new subjects, that his English minister, who understood neither French nor German, could communicate with him only by an imperfect jargon of barbarous Latin.*

George II., after a long and disturbed, but, on the whole, a prosperous and glorious reign, died little respected, and still less regretted by the nation. His foreign birth, habits, and predilections; his illiterate tastes and vulgar capacity; his parsimony, which had an air of sordidness in a king; all tended to alienate his subjects, or at least to make their loyalty the result only of reason, calculation, and their interests. He, however, had the good fortune, chiefly through the energy of his Whig coun-

* "Mentiris impudentissime," was the reply of sir Robert Walpole, on one occasion, to a Hanoverian counsellor in the presence of George I. *Walpole's Reminiscences.*

sellors, and his second son, to overcome a strong party animated against him by motives more generous, and therefore more powerful, than the ordinary springs of faction; he maintained abroad the glory of the British arms; he was himself not without knowledge and experience in the art of war; he possessed the commanding quality of personal courage, which is not quite so common in kings as the world is taught to suppose; and he transmitted to his grandson and successor an undisputed throne, the favour of his virtues, and the far more beneficial contrast of his defects.

George III. succeeded on the 26th of October, 1760, with the prepossessions of his youth, his comely, if not engaging person, and his English birth. On the 18th of the following November he opened the session of parliament in state. It was remarked of the procession by old people *, that the concourse of spectators, and the enthusiasm of the public applause, far exceeded all they had ever witnessed on such occasions. The princess-dowager (of Wales), with the other members of the royal family, occupied the windows of the octagon room in Carlton House, looking into St. James's Park; the apartments of lady Harrington were crowded with distinguished company; the garden walls were lined with "gentility and beauty †;" men cheered, and handkerchiefs were waved by fair hands; whilst the youthful monarch passed with his brilliant escort along the park to the house of peers. The accidental advantage of his English birth was put forward with

* Annual Register. † Ibid.

some felicity of expression and great public effect.* "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton," said he, in his first speech to both houses; and this sentiment vibrated electrically through the kingdom. Proclamation was made of his liberal tastes, and intended patronage of art and literature.† He subscribed to the works of a deceased poet (Thomson); bestowed a literary pension ‡; sent agents to purchase, in his name, objects of art and enlightened curiosity abroad; and purchased, for the purpose of presenting to the British Museum, a curious collection of tracts and manuscripts made for Charles II., but which had fallen into private hands.

The commissions of the judges, since the Revolution, were held during good behaviour, but determined on a demise of the crown. George II. on his accession refused to renew the commission of a judge, who had offended him by deciding that the guardianship of his children belonged not to him, as heir-apparent and father, but to the grandfather as king. Both the purity and soundness of this decision may be questioned, though George II., doubtless, was actuated only by his resentments. One of the first measures of George III. was to recommend an act, securing the judges in their offices during good behaviour, notwithstanding any such demise. The young king, with his narrow education, limited capacity, and good intentions, believed, it may be pre-

* The old earl of Hardwicke censured the expression as a reflection on the late king. *Nicholls's-Recollections.*

† See lord Bute's letter in Doddington's Diary.

‡ On Dr. Kennicott, who was patronised by lord Bute.

sumed, as he declared, "that he was thus securing the independence of the judges, the impartial administration of justice, and the rights and liberties of his loving subjects."* But lord Bute, who had long governed him, and who prompted him now, well knew that this was a specious and hollow boon by which popularity was gained, and influence over the judges increased, not sacrificed, at the commencement of a young man's reign. Had the act further provided against judicial promotions, then, indeed, it would have done away practically with the temptations of hope and fear, and merited all the praises so idly lavished on it.

George I. discarded his wife, and had two mistresses publicly installed in their court rights and privileges. George II., exercising the same prerogative of royalty, then common, "satisfied the clamorous honour of the husband of one mistress by a pension of 1200*l.* a year †," and recommended another mistress to the kindness of his queen. "Love the Walmoden, for she loves me," said he, writing from Germany to queen Caroline, — an enlightened princess, who exercised over him the sway of a superior over a weaker mind so completely that he confided to her even his intrigues of gallantry.‡ The young king had no court mistress, and was not even sus-

* Message to Parliament.

† Horace Walpole's Correspondence.

‡ "I should never think of an amour with your majesty; for I am sure the first person you would tell it to would be the queen," said Mrs. Selwyn (the mother of the celebrated wit) to George II.

pected of any transient court gallantries; but he must have been more or less than man if, in the bright assemblage of English beauty around him, he wholly escaped its influence. Lady Sarah Lenox, sister of the duke of Richmond, was distinguished by him. She has been described as a person then arrayed in all the graces of beauty and extreme youth, and there were rumours and speculations of her being raised to a throne, which she was calculated to adorn; but the German pride of the king, and his mother, with lord Bute's fear of the influence which would be thus gained by the first lord Holland, whose niece lady Sarah Lenox was by marriage, prevented any approach to such a triumph of her charms. To those causes should be added the want of ardour in the royal admirer, and of sympathy in the lady. The passion of love was never felt, and for that reason, among .others, never inspired by George III.

There is no period in British history when the nation seemed so happy and undivided. Tories and Whigs, with their hopes and fears of the new reign, were resting on their arms, and mutually observing each other; the war in Germany was popular and successful; the genius of the elder and greater Pitt was still, ostensibly at least, at the head of the public councils; the march of government was unopposed both in and out of parliament. One wish only seemed ungratified,— the king's marriage, and the direct continuance of the succession. On the 8th of June, 1761, George III. announced to the privy council, that he had chosen for his consort the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburgh

Strelitz, "a princess distinguished by every eminent virtue and amiable endowment."

There are two different versions of the manner in which the choice fell upon this princess. According to one party, the king was captivated by the perusal of a letter, addressed by her, when only sixteen, to the king of Prussia, in favour of the peasantry of Mecklenburgh Strelitz, who suffered greatly from friends and enemies in the war. This would argue in him more simplicity than imagination. Such letters are seldom composed by the personages whose names they bear; and the composition in question* is more like that of an expert rhetorician than of a young lady. According to others, with more probability, a colonel Græme, born in Scotland, but who had passed the greater part of his life, and acquired his military rank, in the service of Holland, was despatched to Germany by the princess-dowager and lord Bute, with specific instructions to search the Protestant courts there for a royal consort. His knowledge of the German language, and the blended prudence of two discreet nations, recommended him for this delicate mission. He saw the young princess of Strelitz, living in the plainest style, with her mother, at Pyrmont; had opportunities of observing her; and decided in her favour as coming nearest to the intentions of those who employed him. It was not thus royal marriages were made in the days of the gallant Buckingham, and the accomplished and unfortunate Charles.

The instructions of colonel Græme were, "that

* See Ann. Reg. 1760.

the bride should be of physically pure blood, perfect form, obliging disposition, and skilled in music." The princess-dowager and lord Bute, designing to continue their dominion over the king, and adopting the policy which induced the duke of Bourbon to negotiate the marriage of Louis XV. with the daughter of the helpless king of Poland, further charged their envoy, it was said, to look only to the minor courts, in order that the person selected should, from gratitude and the want of protection, feel herself wholly dependent on those who had raised her, — and to avoid selecting a princess whose personal charms were likely to give her an ascendant over her husband's mind.*

The hand of the princess Charlotte of Mecklenburgh Strelitz was solicited and obtained in due form. She reached Harwich on the 6th, and St. James's on the 8th, of September, 1761. It was arranged that the royal pair should behold each other for the first time in the garden of the palace. The princess, with "every eminent virtue and amiable endowment," was not handsome. It is recorded, that the bridegroom, at the first glance, was shocked, and started back; but that recovering himself, he raised her from her kneeling posture, and embraced her. The disappointment of the public was still greater than that of the king, though, of course, much less keenly felt. He must have seen her portrait, and was thus somewhat prepared; but the public had been misled by a printseller, who, taking an engraved portrait of a celebrated beauty, removed her name from the plate, and sub-

* Le Montagnard Parvenu.

stituted that of the princess of Mecklenburgh. The marriage was solemnized with great pomp, by the archbishop of Canterbury, the same evening. Ten unmarried daughters of peers (dukes or earls) bore the bride's train in the procession; and the first name in the list is that of lady Sarah Lenox *, whose presence, under the circumstances, would have been a severe trial to any other bridegroom than George III. The king and queen were crowned at Westminster, on Tuesday the 22d of the same month; and on the 12th of August following, at twenty-four minutes after seven in the morning, the queen gave birth to a prince.

Such were the auspices under which George IV. was born, on the 12th of August, 1762, — the anniversary of the accession of his family. A circumstance really accidental, or contrived to appear so, was received as a happy omen, and gave additional excitement to the public joy of the capital. Two British frigates had captured a Spanish register ship, named the Hermione, bound from Lima to Cadiz, and richly laden with treasure. Whilst the Tower guns were still firing, a train of covered waggons, bearing the captured treasure, with a military escort and band playing, and the first and last waggons having the British flag flying, with the Spanish flag lowered beneath it, unexpectedly entered St. James's Street, and approached the palace. Popular acclamations resounded from every

* She married a dissipated baronet; and from being the ornament, became the victim of what is called fashionable life, in the capitals of England and France.

side, and were joined in by the mob of courtiers and domestics from the palace windows.

The new-born heir was by birth duke of Cornwall and Rothsay, earl of Carrick, baron of Renfrew, lord of the Isles, and great steward of Scotland. On the 17th of August, when only four days old, he was created, by letters patent under the great seal, prince of Wales and earl of Chester; and baptized the next day, receiving the names of George Augustus Frederick. Opportunities of seeing the infant prince were liberally allowed. Ladies were admitted on certain days in successive parties to a sight of him in the drawing-room at St. James's. The descriptions given in the publications and private letters of the day may seem trifling, but they are curious and picturesque. A cradle containing the infant was placed beneath a splendid canopy, on a slightly elevated platform, with an ornament of carved work, having a royal coronet in the middle at its head; the child lay beneath an embroidered velvet quilt, bordered with Brussels lace; two fair mutes on either side rocked him to sleep; and the nurse sat in her dignity beside him. The visitors were desired to tread softly; and a slight Chinese railing, which enclosed the platform, prevented the over curious from too near an approach. Addresses of congratulation poured in from numerous public bodies and classes of the people, including the Quakers; congratulatory verses were showered with the same profusion: both the verse and prose are now equally forgotten.

The eclat with which the new reign began, did not long endure. The king, idolised by the people

at his accession, and even at his marriage, had become suspected and disliked, at the birth of the prince of Wales. George III. was brought up under the immediate eye of his mother at Leicester house, in a state of absolute seclusion. His real character was known to very few. The nation, or what is called the public, with its habitual proneness, gave the young sovereign boundless credit in advance. This confidence was not wholly misplaced. He was moral, religious, and regular, — with an education not only imperfect but misdirected. He had capacity enough to become, with due cultivation, an enlightened prince; but not enough to break through his bad training, which fixed the limits, instead of favouring the development, of his faculties. The motive assigned for the state of seclusion in which he was kept by his mother is her fear for his morals, from the prevailing corruption of the young nobility and the court. But this would imply a weakness of judgment, and an excess of moral scruple, little according with the public and private life of that princess. It is more probable that, like Anne of Austria and Mazarin in the case of Louis XIV., the princess-dowager and lord Bute kept the young prince a stranger to knowledge, business, the court, and the world, for the purpose of enabling themselves to continue that influence over the king which they exercised over the heir-apparent. He, however, came to the throne by no means untaught, in what has been not inaptly called king-craft. It may be too much to suppose with a contemporary writer*, who had

* Nicholls's Recollections.

opportunities of being informed, that the lesson constantly inculcated on him by his mother, was, "George, be a king,"—and that this meant a king on the Saxe-gothan model. But it is notorious that he was taught to look upon the popular elements of the constitution as antagonist, if not hostile, forces, to be counterbalanced or neutralised by dexterous management — not directly or violently resisted. The fatal imprudence of Charles I. was constantly in his mind, and frequently on his lips. "Charles I. was a good king, a very good king; but he did not know how to govern by a parliament," has been stated as a frequent expression of his, — and it is a pregnant commentary on his reign.

The principles and designs of the new reign began to discover themselves from the very outset, but did not attract notice. Lord Chatham, then Mr. Pitt, one of the two secretaries of state and chief of the administration, immediately on the death of George II. presented himself to the successor, and suggested to him the necessity of preparing the address which he should make to the privy council. The young king replied that he had already considered the few words which he should use on the occasion. Lord Chatham should have seen from that moment, that he was no longer minister; but the circumstance escaped the sagacity of that great man, — or was disdained by him. Lord Bute was immediately brought into the privy council, and after a short period into the administration. Lord Holdernesse, having bargained for an ample pension and the wardenship of the cinque ports in reversion, resigned the office of secretary of state

to make way for lord Bute; and the princess Amelia (sister of George III.) was induced to surrender in his favour the rangership of Richmond park.

The rise of the favourite began without alarm or offence. It appeared even amiable in the young king to advance the chief of his household, who had for several years been the guide of his youth. The conduct of lord Bute himself was at first calculated to increase the popularity of his master. He affected to be the Mecænas of the new reign; bestowed, or advised, literary rewards; and promoted two very important literary enterprises.* He even affected to rebuke the enthusiastic loyalty of the nation, from a jealous regard for its liberties; declaring in the House of Lords, that "he thought it his duty in his particular situation to guard against the nation's complimenting away its liberties to a prince so beloved."† This shallow hypocrisy was not seen through until he became prime minister.

Even positive and important overt acts of Toryism seemed to make no unfavourable impression. George III. was hardly seated on the throne, when he caused the name of the duke of Cumberland to be struck out of the liturgy. The public, regarding it as an act of deference to the hostile feelings of his mother, or perhaps tired and disgusted with the Whig monopoly of office during the two last

* A work on English antiquities in the manner of Montfaucon; and a new version of the Hebrew Testament, from a collation of various Hebrew manuscripts.

† Parl. Deb.

reigns, looked on with indifference whilst this blow was inflicted on the "great Pan" and protector of the Whigs.

But the great object of the king and the favourite was to be relieved from the superiority of Pitt. Bubb Doddington gives in his Diary a curious, and it may be said a melancholy, account of the treacherous compliances with the views of lord Bute, offered by lord Holdernesse, and, what is still more strange, of his own crawling servility.

Pitt, thwarted in the cabinet at every step, came at last to a most important question respecting Spain. Informed by the sagacity of his own superior mind, — or, according to some accounts*, more positively by the lord mareschal, who had been ambassador from Frederick the Great to the court of Madrid, and soon after made his peace with the British government,—he denounced Spain as meditating to take part in the war, and urged it upon his colleagues in the cabinet that this was the moment for "striking a blow which should humble the whole house of Bourbon." They could not reach the wisdom, and they were startled by the boldness, of his views. Irritated by opposition, and impatient of counsels and capacities which he despised, he declared that he was called to the ministry by the voice of the people, and "would no longer remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures which he could not *guide*." The word "*guide*" employed in the warmth of the moment, and consciousness of superiority, grated harshly on

* Almon's Anecdotes of Lord Chatham.

the mortified vanity of those around him. On putting the question to the vote, he was opposed by all but his brother-in-law lord Temple, and both resigned. The king, anxious and prepared for the event, received him graciously, accepted his resignation, and rewarded his public services with a pension of 3000*l.* a year to himself, and a peerage to his wife. The Annual Register (5th Oct. 1761) gives a circumstantial narrative of the discussion in the cabinet, and of Mr. Pitt's resignation of the seals into the hands of the king. It is to be hoped, for the honour of human nature,—at least, of public virtue and genius,—that the illustrious Chatham did not, on the king's announcing to him a pension, with a peerage in his family, degrade himself, as there described, by a grovelling rather than grateful ecstasy of self-reproach and tears.

The conclusion seems not only probable, but resistless, that the secret object of this glittering liberality was to crush, if not the public virtue, at least the popularity of "the great commoner." The design was accordant with the artful system of the favourite and the spirit of the new reign; and Mr. Pitt had no sooner resigned, than the hireling pack of government writers under the orders of lord Bute attempted to run him down with clamour and calumnies. The surviving friends of "old sir Robert" joined in the cry. His son Horace Walpole in one of his letters has the following, among other grosser but less pointed observations:—"Mr. Pitt, like Cromwell, has always promoted the self-denying ordinance, but contrived to be excused from it himself." With others who viewed the matter im-

partially, and even felt kindly towards him, his acceptance of a pension was a subject of regret. He was reduced to the mortifying necessity of vindicating himself in the eyes of the city of London, by a short, general, and indignant defence addressed to the town-clerk. The city responded with enthusiasm. A few days after his resignation he accompanied the king and queen into the city, on the installation of a new lord mayor; the multitude had eyes and voices only for him, whilst the king was regarded with indifference, and the favourite treated with humorous saturnalian ribaldry.*

There was something in the character of this great and celebrated man which made him a disagreeable colleague in the cabinet. To the two sovereigns whom he served, he was formally submissive. He conciliated George II. by continuing an audience on his knees, when his hereditary gout no longer permitted him to stand, and etiquette forbade him to sit.† But in the cabinet he made his superiority too relentlessly felt. His haughty temper is evident from the letters addressed to him by Mr. Hans Stanley, then negotiating at Paris‡, and from the fact that his secretaries were never allowed to sit in his presence.§

The favourite proceeded in his career with rapid strides. Not satisfied with enjoying the unlimited confidence of the sovereign, and practically "guiding" the measures of government since the resignation

* Gentleman's Magazine.
† Thackeray's Life of Lord Chatham.
‡ Ibid. and State Paper Office.
§ Seward's Anecdotes.

of Pitt, he determined to be formally appointed first lord of the treasury. The duke of Newcastle, who had conspired against Pitt, in the vain hope that he could resume in his decrepitude the influence which he had exercised in the preceding reign, received an ungracious intimation that he should immediately retire. The ambitious mediocrity of the duke was endured for his engaging manners, for the liberal use which he made of his vast fortune, and for his great zeal in favour of the house of Hanover. A retiring pension was offered him by the king. He replied, "that if he could no longer serve his country, he would, at least, not be a charge upon it." His mediocrity was forgotten — his disinterestedness and liberality, his long and zealous if not able services, his noble exit, and his old age, were alone remembered — and the manner of his dismissal was indignantly condemned.

The wonder is that the duke of Newcastle had not resigned long before. Lord Bute had obtained a complete and mortifying ascendant. Whilst the duke's levees were unattended, those of lord Bute were crowded. "La chaleur est excessive," said Bothmar, the Danish minister, at a crowded levee of lord Bute's. George Selwyn humorously replied, "Pour se mettre au froid il faut aller chez le duc de Newcastle." The duke of Devonshire, lord chamberlain, would not brook the presumption of the favourite, and resigned in disgust. The king not only accepted his resignation, but struck his name off the list of privy counsellors. Even lord Hard-

* "He left the public service," says lord Chesterfield, "poorer by 300,000*l.* than when he entered it."

wicke, with his love of place and pelf, found his situation intolerable. The queen's first appearance in public after the birth of the prince was to accompany the king to witness the installation of lord Bute, and prince William, the king's brother, as knights of the Garter, at Windsor; and it was, doubtless, as a marked honour that lord Bute was thus associated with the first prince of the blood.

The conduct of Spain fully bore out the advice of Pitt. Having put her marine in order, and received safely the flota with American treasure, she avowed that secret and antisocial treaty with France, called the Family Compact. Hostilities were begun, but the precious opportunity was gone by; and the inspiring energy and genius of Pitt were no longer at the helm. Lord Bute, a contemptible war minister, aspired after the purer glory of giving peace to Europe, and renewed the negotiations. The duke of Bedford went to Paris, the duc de Nivernois came to London, as pacificators; and a definitive treaty of peace was concluded on the 10th of February, 1763. This return of peace but increased the favourite's unpopularity. It was scouted in and out of parliament, especially by Pitt in the house of commons, as a disgraceful transaction, in which the national interest and honour were alike compromised. A frivolous attempt was made by others to fix upon it a charge of corruption.

The public clamour appears to have been substantially unjust. It was raised principally against the cession of St. Lucie. But how much treasure and human blood was saved by the sacrifice, if such it

was, of an insignificant and pestilent island! In spite of all opposition and reproach the treaty was approved by both houses, with large majorities; having been vindicated with great skill and power by Henry Fox, afterwards lord Holland, in the house of commons, and by lord Bute himself, with a proud self-approving eloquence, of which he was thought incapable, in the house of lords. "I wish," said he, "no other epitaph to be inscribed on my tomb, than that I was the author of the peace on the merits of which your lordships are now called to decide."

In spite of opposition, unpopularity, and clamour, lord Bute seemed secure with his parliamentary majorities, and the king's entire confidence, when, to the astonishment of all, he suddenly resigned in April, 1763; "and thus," says Horace Walpole, "a fortnight's opposition has destroyed that scandalous but vast majority which a fortnight had purchased; and, after five months, a plan of absolute power has been demolished by a panic."

Lord Bute proclaimed with ridiculous pomp, that having given peace to his country, and organised an effective ministry in the hands of his sovereign, his mission was fulfilled, and he sought that literary retirement which he loved. But he had no real taste for either retirement or literature. The eager ambition with which he rushed to the head of affairs proves the one, and the express testimony of those who knew him leaves no doubt that his pretensions to literature were equally shallow. "There is," says lord Waldegrave, "an extraordinary appearance of wisdom both in his look and manner

of speaking; for whether the subject be serious or trifling, he is equally pompous, slow, and sententious. Not content with being wise, he would be thought a polite scholar, and a man of great erudition, but has the misfortune never to succeed, except with those who are exceedingly ignorant." His sudden retreat was the effect of a panic, as Walpole has described it. He had to face in parliament a minority, weak on a division, but terrible in debate; out of parliament, the humorous ribaldry of the populace, and the attacks of the press.* A boot and petticoat were paraded through the streets, shortly before his resignation; and the celebrated Wilkes, already arrived at the forty-third number of his weekly North Briton, had just addressed to him a mock dedication of Ben Jonson's "Fall of Mortimer," rivalling the letters of Junius in bitterness, with the advantage of a more simple style. Wilkes, happening soon after its appearance to meet Dyson, asked him if he was going to the treasury;—"because," said he, "a friend of mine has just dedicated a play to lord Bute; and as it is usual to give dedicators something on those occasions, I wish you would put his lordship in mind of it." Whether lord Bute had or had not the same influence and intimacy with the princess-dowager, which Mortimer had with queen Isabella, were now a very idle

* The following epigram on his blue riband appeared in one of the newspapers: —

Oh! Bute, if instead of contempt and of odium,
You wish to obtain a whole nation's eulogium,
From your neck to your gullet transfer the blue string,
And our hearts are all yours from the very first swing.

enquiry. The satirical malice of the populace, and of Wilkes, proves only that such an imputation was public: but Horace Walpole charges the princess confidently and coarsely; and lord Waldegrave is little less explicit, though he insinuates rather than asserts. "The last prince of Wales," says lord Waldegrave, "used to say that lord Bute was a fine showy man, who would make an excellent ambassador in a court where there was no business * * * * *; but the sagacity of the princess-dowager has discovered other accomplishments, of which the prince her husband may not, perhaps, have been the most competent judge."

If the ascendancy of lord Bute rendered the king's government unpopular, the royal habits and mode of life rendered his court by no means agreeable. The king and queen lived in great privacy, especially after the birth of a second prince: courts were rarely held; and the few evening parties are described as dull, economical, and thinly attended. Horace Walpole, the chief chronicler of anecdotes of the period, in high life and politics, says, in 1763, "There has been a very private ball at court:—they danced till one, and then parted without a supper."

The royal taste for privacy was represented as arising from avarice; and the queen's parsimony was injuriously contrasted with her supposed accumulation of wealth, already begun, and the passion which she showed for the possession and display of diamonds. She would appear resplendent with precious stones on a court-day, and live in a style of degrading economy at Richmond for the next three months.

"The recluse life led here" (at Richmond), says the same chronicler, "which is carried to such an excess of privacy and economy that the queen's friseur waits on them at table, and that four pounds of beef only are allowed for their soup, disgusts all sorts of people. The drawing-rooms are abandoned."

These sordid details may have been overcharged, but were certainly not unfounded. Other circumstances tended to lessen the popularity of the queen. She kept English women of rank at a royal distance, and admitted her German attendants and friends to her familiarity. This offensive distinction recoiled, in one instance, upon herself. One of her German followers, a countess de Gertzen, distinguished for having returned the gallantries of Frederick the great with a box on the ear, thought she might indulge at St. James's the same freedom which was allowed her in private, and left the circle, to converse on equal terms with the queen, in the presence of a crowded court. The queen, humiliated and enraged, said to those immediately near her, loud enough to be heard by others, "I assure you this woman is as ridiculous at Mecklenburg as she is here — like your duchess of Queensbery;" — intimating by the similitude, that there were in England, as well as in Germany, ridiculous court ladies.

CHAP. II.

CHILDHOOD OF THE PRINCE OF WALES. — STATE OF PARTIES. — TAXATION OF AMERICA. — REGENCY. — FIRST ROCKINGHAM MINISTRY. — LAST MINISTRY OF LORD CHATHAM.

THE heir-apparent proved a new link between the crown and the nation at a moment when both the court and government had become thus unpopular. His birth seemed to revive, for a moment, some portion of the public joy which beamed round George III. on his accession, and down to his marriage. This was so strongly felt, that no occasion was lost of presenting the infant prince to the public view. The birth of a second prince, the late duke of York, took place on the 16th of August, 1763; and by way of doing honour to the occasion, the prince of Wales was exhibited frequently at the palace windows, to the crowds which succeeded each other during the day.

He had scarcely completed his second year, when courtiers made their way to his presence by the back stairs. The most remarkable of these was Pulteney earl of Bath, in his 80th year. "You see," says Horace Walpole, in a letter dated 1764, "lord Bath does not hobble up the back stairs for nothing. Oh! he is an excellent courtier. The prince of Wales shoots him with plaything arrows;

he falls down dead, and the child kisses him alive again. Melancholy ambition! I heard him t'other night propose himself to lady Townshend, as a rich widower. Such spirits at fourscore are pleasing; but when one has lost all one's children, to be flattering those of kings!" The earl of Bath died in the same year. Walpole cannot be supposed to feel very kindly towards his father's great adversary; but his view of that celebrated man, in this instance, seems untinged by prejudice. His last remaining son, who would have inherited his wealth and titles, died in Portugal: he was reduced in his old age to a state in which another would feel only desolation and despair; yet did he retain two things the least compatible with such a state,—his ambition and his cheerfulness.

The hereditary prince of Brunswick came over to England, and married the princess Augusta, sister of George III., in 1764. The late queen Caroline was the fruit of this marriage; thus far most inauspicious. They soon set out for Brunswick, narrowly escaped being lost in a storm off Helvoetsluys, and returned to England in the following year. On the 26th of December of that year (1765), the prince of Wales, then three years old, was associated by the king in the investiture of the order of the garter with the father of his future wife. The hostility, or jealousy, which is supposed to have animated queen Charlotte towards the family of the duke of Brunswick, seems to have manifested itself very early towards himself. He was much better received by the public, and in the circles of the nobility, than at St. James's. One cause of offence assigned was his

visiting lord Chatham, then in bad health at Hayes. The prince of Brunswick had the strongest claim to the command in Hanover upon the restoration of peace, after having led the army with great success and glory during the war. It was refused him, through the influence of the queen, and conferred upon her brother. This is mentioned as the first, and one of the very few instances, in which she influenced the disposal of the royal patronage for several years after her marriage.

It would be trifling and tedious to follow the progress of mere childhood. A few particulars, however, may be stated. On the 1st of March (St. David's day), 1765, the prince of Wales, not yet three years old, received and replied to an address. The treasurer and stewards of the charity called "the ancient Britons" went in procession to St. James's, were admitted to kiss the prince's hand, and presented to him an address, to which, having of course been tutored for the occasion, he replied as follows: —"Gentlemen, I thank you for this mark of your duty to the king, and wish prosperity to this charity." He then placed in the hands of the treasurer a purse of 100 guineas. The king gave an example of independent opinion on the 3d of March, 1766, by having the prince of Wales, and prince Frederick, styled bishop of Osnaburgh, inoculated. It demanded no common strength of judgment and character at a time when the public prejudice ran violently against inoculation. The prince of Wales received about the same time his first military commission. He was appointed by a king's letter addressed to the lord mayor, and he continued to his

death, captain-general of the honourable artillery company of the city of London.

The prince of Wales and bishop of Osnaburgh appeared for the first time as personages at the drawing-room this year, on the queen's birthday; and the attendance is described as unusually brilliant and crowded.

Fêtes were given on the same occasion by several of the nobility and others in London. One of the most remarkable was that of Miss Chudleigh, called "the virgin Chudleigh," and afterwards the notorious duchess of Kingston. It was got up with great scenic splendour, including fancy transparencies in honour of the several members of the royal family. The device of the prince of Wales was a ship, with the appropriate motto of "multorum spes." But it is difficult to be the object of many hopes without producing also many disappointments. It was a strange state of society in the higher ranks, which tolerated Miss Chudleigh, living in splendour without ostensible means, clandestinely married to lord Bristol (then Mr. Hervey), yet not only receiving the attentions, but sharing the fortune of the duke of Kingston, and, during the whole time, maid of honour to the princess-dowager of Wales.

The disastrous marriage of the princess Caroline Matilda, sister of George III., and posthumous child of Frederick prince of Wales, with the king of Denmark, was negotiated in this, and solemnised in the following year. It is not the only instance of the unfortunate control which George III. loved to exercise over the hearts and happiness of the mem-

bers of his family. Persons of limited capacity are prone to this species of private despotism. They reconcile it to themselves by the goodness of their intentions. The princess, from a presentiment of the ills which awaited her, or from having already fixed her affections in England, was continually in tears. It was remarked of her portrait by Reynolds, taken shortly before her departure, that the expression was not pleasing. The painter accounted for this by the impossibility which she found of restraining her tears even whilst she was sitting to him. The marriage was solemnised by proxy, at the royal chapel, and at six next morning she set out for Harwich from Carlton House. Her parting with her mother was said to have been heart-rending. Her sorrows were so visible whilst she entered the carriage, that the multitude, which had gathered from curiosity in Pall Mall, wept and sobbed as she departed.

It would appear that the injurious effects of a style of life too simple and private were perceived, and materially departed from. More frequent courts were held, and the heir-apparent was studiously brought forward. The prince of Wales, decorated with the order of the Garter, held a drawing-room in 1769, when he was but seven years old. The bishop of Osnaburgh, in his sixth year, figured on the occasion as a knight of the Bath; and the princess-royal, only four years old, seated on an ottoman, shared the honours of the day. This premature appearance of mere children was not the effect of parental vanity or weakness, but a reluctant sacrifice to the un-

popularity of the court. The children were interesting and well brought up, and their appearance, with the engaging associations of childhood, innocence, and their relation to the state, was calculated to disarm party spirit, and assuage discontent.

To give an intelligible view of the state of parties and public feeling at this period, it is necessary to recur to the retirement of lord Bute. That nobleman, by resigning, divested himself only of his official responsibility. He retained all the influence of office, and more than its odium. The system of government by favouritism, charged upon the reign of George III., under the various designations of "interior cabinet," "double cabinet," "efficient," as opposed to the "official ministry," originated with lord Bute at the accession of his royal pupil, was suspended, or rather merged in his administration, and revived by him on his retirement. The secret cabinet has been denied, and the imputation stigmatised as "a mere bugbear," and as "the watchword of a party;" but — to select two conspicuous authorities from many — its existence was affirmed by lords Chatham and Hardwicke.

"You know a certain cardinal [Mazarin], who governed France as absolutely when he was absent as when he was present," said lord Hardwicke, in an unreserved private letter to his son. Lord Bute, it should be mentioned, had announced his intention to go abroad for the benefit of his health. Lord Chatham asserted his own experience of secret influence, on many occasions, in both houses; and he assuredly would have disdained a hackneyed byword which he believed to be groundless. The denial by some

writers has arisen from mere sycophancy; that of others has been inspired by the vain delusion that they were rising above the level of party, to discern calumny from truth, and give a lesson of impartial and superior reason to mankind. But there is little rashness in discrediting those who would pretend to be "wiser than the wise*," and to see better than two eminent statesmen into transactions in which they were the persons chiefly engaged.

Warburton says of lord Bute that he was the most unfit of mankind to be a prime minister in England, because he was "the king's friend, an honest man, and a Scotchman." The public execration followed him for reasons somewhat different from those assigned by the bishop;—as a Scotchman, a favourite, an enemy of freedom, and the tutor of George III. in toryism and dissimulation. To these may be added the further disqualification of incapacity.

He was succeeded by Mr. George Grenville. The two secretaries of state were lords Egremont and Halifax. Wilkes soon published the famous number forty-five of his North Briton; and an odious contest began between a sovereign and his government on the one side, and an obnoxious individual on the other. Such a publication would pass unnoticed by the most sensitive government at the present day. The gist of the libel was, imputing falsehood to the king's speech at the opening of parliament. The very convenient parliamentary understanding to treat it as the speech merely of

* Plus sage que les sages. — *Molière.*

the minister had not yet been invented. It is a curious fact that the libel was dictated unconsciously by lord Chatham. Mr. George Grenville and his brother, lord Temple, were opposed to each other in politics. The former, however, as a mark of courtesy, sent lord Temple a copy of the royal speech the day before it was delivered. Lord Temple took it to Pitt, and whilst they were discussing it Wilkes happened to call. The subject was continued in his presence. Pitt expressed himself with his accustomed energy and fervour; and Wilkes transformed the conversation, retaining in many places the precise language, into his next North Briton.* The war between the crown and Wilkes raged violently, with a few intermissions, for a long period. He obtained ultimately a complete triumph upon the three great questions in dispute, — general warrants, his expulsion, and his outlawry. Lord Temple adhered to him with a generous fidelity, which appears by Wilkes's letters to have been justly appreciated by him. Wilkes was a man of bad private character, and doubtful public principles, but he was identified with a just and noble cause †, and his triumph was that of the constitution. The agency of bad men in politics,

* Anecdotes of lord Chatham. — Archdeacon Coxe has permitted himself to speak disparagingly of these valuable and authentic anecdotes. The author (Almon), by his private and public integrity, obtained the respect of some of the most distinguished persons of his time, and the particular confidence of lord Temple.

† The cry of "Wilkes and liberty!" was so common, that a story was told of a person humorously beginning his letter with "I take the Wilkes-and-liberty to inform you," &c.

like poisons in therapeutics, may produce beneficial and saving effects.

The conduct of his adversaries, too, was truly base. Lord Halifax having seized his papers by an illegal warrant, selected from them, and retained such as he could employ against him, and had the effrontery to avow it.* Wilkes had caused to be printed at his private press, and with the strictest precautions of secrecy, a few copies of a licentious poem.† The ministers had the infamy to procure a copy, by bribing a printer to steal it; and the publication, if it can be so called, thus criminally obtained, was denounced in the house of lords as a breach of privilege, from an indecent and burlesque use made of the name of bishop Warburton in the notes to it. The organ of complaint in the house of lords was lord Sandwich, whose private profligacies were notorious, and who had the scandalous dexterity to procure the commission of the theft.‡ Hypocritical effrontery has prospered in England since the days of Wilkes and lord Sandwich, but scarcely affords a more flagrant single instance. "Happy nation," said lord Chesterfield, "for which God has been pleased to raise up in Mr. Wilkes a patriotic defender of our rights and liberties, and in the earl of Sandwich so zealous a defender of our religion and morals."

The ministry, regarded as a mere instrument in

* See his Letter to Wilkes.

† The greater and grosser parts were ascribed to Potter, son of the archbishop.

‡ He was in consequence nicknamed "Jemmy Twitcher" by Churchill.

the hands of lord Bute, was so violently assailed, and appeared so destitute of energy, that overtures were made to Pitt. He received a royal command to attend the king, and had an audience which lasted three hours. The king addressed him most graciously, encouraged him to give his opinion freely, listened to him with courteous and approving attention, and appointed him a second audience on the next day but one. He went accordingly, was again well received, and listened to for two hours, graciously, but evasively, came away from the royal presence without advancing a single step in the negotiation, and declared that he could not for his life, if he were asked, tell upon what points it had broken off.* This mystery has been differently solved by the supposition of two intrigues. Lord Bute, it has been said, perceiving the weakness and incompetency of the ministry, advised the king to resort again to Pitt. The ministers, piqued at the favourite's thus carrying them to the royal closet in his pocket, practised on his fears, by holding out the certainty of his being impeached for his treaty of peace, if Pitt and the opposition came in. Lord Bute took fright, again privately counter-advised the king, and hence Pitt's second audience ended in courteous evasion. The other, and more probable, solution is, that there was no real intention, from the beginning, of bringing in Pitt, but that overtures were made to him merely for the purpose of keeping Mr. George Grenville, who was sometimes refractory, in more implicit obedience to the wishes of the favourite and the sovereign.

* Lord Hardwicke's Letter, already cited.

Mr. George Grenville is regarded as the author of the fatal attempt to impose taxes, through the British parliament, upon America. But there is some ground for doubting that the suggestion was his own.* The authority of Charles Jenkinson, first earl of Liverpool, is given, as having declared that the stamp-act did not originate with Mr. Grenville.† It must, then, have originated with the favourite, or with the king himself. George III. certainly cherished it with the desperate affection of a parent.

The king had been seriously indisposed in 1765; the nature of his complaint remains a mystery to the present day. By some it is affirmed, and by others denied, to have been the same malady which ultimately incapacitated him to reign. The secrecy observed respecting the precise character of his disease offers a presumption in favour of the affirmative. It led to an important measure, and to the dissolution of the ministry. His indisposition was not long, and, according to his own expression in a message to parliament, not dangerous. He, however, was no sooner restored to health, than he recommended in person to parliament to make provision for a regency in case of his decease during the nonage of the next heir to the throne. The speech in which this provision was recommended well expresses the sentiments of a king who contemplated the uncertainty of human life with a manly calmness, and his individual life chiefly with reference to his subjects and his family.‡ This

* History of the Minority. Nicholls's Recollections.

† Anecdotes of Lord Chatham.

‡ See Annual Register.

measure, however, like so many others of his reign, is involved in darkness and intrigue. The ostensible ministers are stated to have received instructions to prepare it without having been previously consulted.* Whether from mere inadvertence, or with secret intention, they reproduced, *mutatis mutandis*, the regency act of the late reign passed on the death of Frederick prince of Wales, empowering the king to appoint as regent, in case of a minority, the queen, or any other person of his royal family usually resident in the realm. A question arose, Who composed the royal family? The judges pronounced that the royal family embraced only the descendants of George II. This would exclude the princess-dowager, whom the king would be most disposed to appoint; but Mr. Grenville obtained his approval, by declaring the success of the measure compromised if the princess were included. The king acquiesced, or seemed to acquiesce, and it passed the house of lords. Whilst in its progress through the house of commons, Mr. Morton, a friend of lord Bute, acting under the instructions of the secret cabinet, and in concert with lord chancellor Northington†, suddenly started up, and proposed to introduce the name of the princess-dowager. The amendment took the ministers by surprise, and passed without opposition.

It seems probable that the ministers sought by excluding the princess to venture a step towards emancipating themselves from the secret cabinet. But they only provoked the vengeance of the

* Belsham's Memoirs of George III.

† Nicholls's Recollections.

princess and the favourite, and lost the little they possessed of the confidence of the king.

The duke of Cumberland made immediate overtures in the king's name to lord Temple and Pitt; and asked the latter upon what conditions he would accept office. Pitt replied, that "his only condition was to be allowed to carry the constitution along with him to St. James's." From the result of the conference, it appears that this condition was not complied with. The ministers, rendered desperate, or supposing themselves secure in the difficulty of supplying their places, now resolved on open war with the secret cabinet, and insisted on the removal of Mr. Stuart Mackenzie, the brother of lord Bute; lord Holland, his friend; and the duke of Northumberland, whose son was married to his daughter. This insurrection of the official against the secret advisers of the crown was chiefly ascribed to the duke of Bedford, a nobleman of distinguished public spirit, who is said to have remonstrated with the king upon his want of good faith, with a frankness and intrepidity which made the king's cheek redden with anger and shame. The character of the duke of Bedford is grievously misjudged by those who know it only as it is obscured and distorted by an anonymous but classic libeller.*

The Grenville ministry was absolutely condemned. A second overture was made, through the duke of Cumberland, to Pitt and lord Temple, but with as little success as the former. They required to come in with a strong and undivided cabinet. This did

* Letters of Junius.

not accord with the king's system of governing by a ministry so weak as to be a pliant instrument in his hands, or so divided that he could play one part against the other, as in the case of lord Northington on the regency question. The duke of Cumberland then applied as a last resort to the old duke of Newcastle, and the short-lived Rockingham administration was the result. The duke of Newcastle, now reduced to a mere shadow by the effect of age upon natural incapacity, took the pageant station of lord privy seal, leaving lord Rockingham the lead, as first commissioner of the treasury. Lord Temple expressed his unmeasured condemnation of the new cabinet, as a compromise with the vicious system of secret influence behind the throne. Pitt spoke with moderation, expressing his respect for the characters of some of the new ministers, but withholding his confidence. This tranquil, deliberate expression of distrust weakened lord Rockingham's hold upon public opinion more, perhaps, than direct and violent attack.* The death of the duke of Cumberland, a zealous whig, with the prejudices as well as principles of the party, and dubbed a hero, on the strength of having gained a single battle, by the party in return, was a serious blow to lord Rockingham. But that which sealed his dismissal was the repeal of the stamp-act, the wisest act of his ad-

* There is an obvious analogy between this case of lord Chatham and the Rockingham ministry, and that of a distinguished living nobleman and the ministry of a late statesman, which may be more particularly and properly alluded to hereafter.

mipistration. George III. did not know, or, knowing, did not act upon, that axiom, which is no less true in morals than in mathematics, that the right line is the shortest from any given point to another. Instead of frankly expressing to lord Rockingham in the first instance his disapprobation of the repeal, he acquiesced in the measure, and then conspired against his own minister. Lord Bute, in the house of peers, insinuated that the repeal of the stamp-act was disagreeable to the king. Lord Rockingham asserted the king's declared approbation. That which was insinuated by lord Bute was, notwithstanding lord Rockingham's denial, repeated by lord Strange next day. Upon this lord Rockingham had an audience, and requested the king's expression of his approbation in writing. This was refused; and lord Rockingham saw he was no longer minister, though the king still continued to treat him with the most gracious cajolery. "Lord Rockingham," says the late Mr. Nicholls, "told me that the king never showed him such distinguished marks of kindness, as after he had secretly determined to get rid of him." This popular administration lasted but a year. Among its historic distinctions, and perhaps the most permanent, is its having produced on the political stage a man of the greatest powers, and the greatest public effect, who embarked his passions as well as his talents in every cause which he advocated, — Edmund Burke.

Mr. Pitt received a *carte blanche* to form an administration, with boundless assurances of the royal confidence. He offered lord Temple the first commissionership of the treasury, but reserved to

himself the selection of the cabinet, in order to have full and free scope for his administrative genius. Lord Temple indignantly refused; and the result was one of those ruptures of a long and affectionate friendship, by clashing politics, which even posterity contemplates with mournful regret. The administration formed by him contained many respectable and some historic names: "that prodigy, Charles Townshend," as he was called by Burke; general Conway; lord Shelburne, a young nobleman of the most accomplished talents; and lord Camden. Pitt himself, raised to the peerage by the title of earl of Chatham, took the privy seal, whilst the duke of Grafton, first lord of the treasury, was the nominal head of the government.

Lord Chatham began with all the energy of his character and haughtiness of his spirit. "I dare look in the face the proudest connections of this country," said he to lord Egmont, whom he thought it expedient to remove. But his ministry soon proved a disappointment to the public and himself. "When Mr. Pitt," says Burke, "had formed his cabinet, he was no longer minister." A deep wound was given to his popularity by his acceptance of a peerage. Removed by it from all contact with the people, like the personage in classic fable raised above his native element, he ceased to be invincible. His conduct was contrasted disadvantageously with lord Rockingham's. That virtuous nobleman went out of office with the *éclat* of popular measures and personal disinterestedness; complimented with public addresses, and received in triumph by a numerous cavalcade of gentlemen on his return to his country

seat. Lord Chatham was accused, but most unfairly, of capitulating with the court and its secret advisers.

It seems anomalous, that two noblemen, formed for accord and mutual esteem by their public principles and personal characters, should regard each other, as lords Rockingham and Chatham certainly did, with feelings of alienation. Had either joined the ministry of the other, the system of favouritism would have been overthrown, and the royal mind compelled to abandon its secret self-willed tactics for a more constitutional identity with its responsible advisers. But it would seem to be with political parties as with religious sects, — the nearer they approach each other, the greater their antipathy. Hence, in coalitions, they are the extremes that generally combine.

Lord Chatham soon found that he had lost the confidence of the people, without gaining that of the king. His health, infirm from his youth upwards, gave way to vexation and regret, and constrained him to frequent absences from the cabinet meetings. The king wrote him during these absences the most gracious assurances of support, kindly begging him to think only of his health *; but, on re-appearing, he found his counsels neglected, and his measures thrown aside. Disappointed and wearied, — his mind† broken down with his body, — he resigned the privy seal by the hands of lord Camden — too

* Anecdotes of Lord Chatham.

† "I am apt to agree with the majority of the better sort, that 'this noble mind is quite o'erthrown,'" says general Lee, writing at this period of lord Chatham to the king of Poland.

infirm or too disgusted to appear in person at court. Lord Shelburne, attached to his principles and person, soon followed his example.

A strong light is thrown on the character of George III. by his relations up to this time with his ministers, especially with lord Chatham. He appears to have well understood "those arts of drollery," as they are called by madame Roland, speaking of Louis XVI., "which kings know how to practise when it suits them, and which form the chief part of their education." George III. seems to have felt a secret pleasure or vanity in circumventing superior minds by playing on their good faith. That lord Chatham was thus played upon there is in this case the best of all authorities — his own. On his return to public life, after about eighteen months' retirement, he denounced with indignation "the secret influence of an invisible power; — of a *favourite* who had ruined every plan for the public good, and betrayed every man WHO HAD TAKEN RESPONSIBLE office." — "There is," said he, "no security, no safety, against this malignant power. I have been myself duped, I confess it with sorrow — duped when I least expected treachery — when the prospect was fair, and the appearances of confidence were strong — when, with great deliberation and pains, I had formed schemes highly interesting, and of the utmost public importance. These schemes had been approved in council, and assented to by the king; but on my return from a short and, in my state of health, necessary absence, I found my plans all vanished into air — 'into thin air.' In the closet I found every thing gracious and amiable: I re-

ceived the most condescending promises of support. I own *I was credulous, I was duped, I was deceived.*" * He said on another occasion, "The late good old king (George II.) possessed the feelings of humanity, and, among his many royal and manly virtues, was eminently endued with justice, truth, and sincerity. *He had something about him, by which it was possible for you to know whether he liked you or disliked you.*"

Never in England has the ministry been more odious, or the court more unpopular, than at this period (1769–70). Wilkes, returned from exile and oblivion in the face of his outlawry, dropped like a shell at the feet of the government. His reiterated election for Middlesex, and rejection by the house, with the accessory circumstances, exasperated the public, and infuriated the populace. The military were called out, blood was spilt, and a notion prevailed that murder was screened, and justice defeated at its source. The press teemed with inflammatory publications: the most remarkable of these was Junius's celebrated "Letter to the King," —a masterpiece of poignant force in a polished and tranquil style. Prosecution only rendered the judge odious and the ministry more despised. The old envenomed leaven of favouritism was supposed to act more mischievously than ever. ‡ Addresses to the king, from London, Westminster, and Middlesex,

* Life and Speeches of Chatham. † Ibid.

‡ "Under the same secret and malign influence, which through each successive administration has defeated every good and suggested every bad intention, the majority of the house of commons have deprived your people of their dearest rights."
(Address of the Common Hall, March 14. 1770.)

couched in language of vehement remonstrance, criminated the ministry of treason to the constitution. Lord Camden was dismissed from the chancellorship, or withdrew his virtue from danger and his reputation from disgrace. No lawyer of decorous pretensions would accept the seals. Mr. C. Yorke pledged himself to his brother, the second lord Hardwicke, to refuse them. But the king sent for him; after much denial, "cajoled" him to accept them; and having succeeded, is said to have turned round to the courtiers and laughed at the simplicity of the chancellor elect. Mr. Yorke called at his brother's house, was refused admittance, and terminated his life in a manner which created deep emotion from the circumstances, and regret for his virtues and talents.

The house of commons, or rather the venal majority, shared the discredit of the administration. In all the petitions a dissolution of parliament was associated with the dismissal of the ministry. The few counter-petitions, obtained with difficulty, were of little weight, and some of doubtful authenticity. The young prince of Wales, now in his eighth year, was made the vehicle of conveying one of these to the king. It was placed by a "sir Richard Perrot" in the hands of the prince, who acknowledged the receipt of it in the following letter, written with his own hand:—"Sir Richard Perrot may assure the barony of Flint that I have delivered the petition to the king, and am much pleased with the loyalty and affection to the king and to myself, expressed by the ancient Britons on this occasion."*

* The following notice of this address appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine at the time:—"The concurring accounts in

George III. had an obstinacy of opinion which would not be enlightened, and an absoluteness of will which would not be opposed. He adhered to his tactics of using his ministers as mere tools, in spite of public odium and mischief; and he met the remonstrances of the metropolis, in particular, with indignity. The lord mayor and two aldermen went with a petition to St. James's in 1769. After being kept waiting, and treated with contumely in the ante-chamber, they were admitted to the presence of the king. He took the petition, handed itto the lord in waiting, without deigning to give an answer, and turned his back upon them to laugh and talk with the Danish minister. A similar address was presented in 1770, which the king answered with a harsh rebuke. Beckford, lord mayor this year, a man of strong sense, nerve, and democratic independence, presented a third address, was replied to by the king in terms of disapprobation, and asked leave to rejoin. In the novelty and confusion of the request, leave was given, or assumed; and Beckford improvised an admirable reply, which concluded as follows:—"Permit me, sire, further to observe, that whoever has already dared, or shall hereafter endeavour, by false insinuations and suggestions to alienate your majesty's affections from your loyal

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the papers of an adventurer under the above name involve a mystery how such a man could procure an address, and what means he could use to obtain countenance at court to present it. Yet that an address from Flint was presented, and by one who calls himself 'sir Richard Perrot,' appears by a letter written by the young prince, with his own hand."

subjects in general, and from the city of London in particular, is an enemy to your majesty's person and family, a violator of the public peace, and a betrayer of our happy constitution, as it was established at our glorious and necessary revolution." "The lord mayor," says the Annual Register, "waited near a minute for a reply, but none was given." The fact was, that the king stood mute with anger; and the whole court with astonishment. Beckford's address was applauded to enthusiasm in the city, and is inscribed on the statue erected to him in Guildhall.

The king's implacable resentment towards Wilkes was equally unfortunate. A pardon, when that person meanly crouched for it, would have annihilated him — contempt, when he returned, would soon have reduced him to his level. The king's personal enmity invested him with factitious importance and a false public interest. It was perfectly known and acted on by the common people. "A fellow," says one of the publications of the day, "who stood near his majesty (at Epsom races), cried out 'Wilkes and liberty!' on which some of the light horse drew their swords, but the fellow escaped." It would appear from this paragraph that the military thought they were licensed to draw their swords upon the populace on the slightest provocation. The knowledge of the king's weakness was said to have found its way even into the royal nursery. The prince of Wales, having undergone some punishment or privation, avenged himself, with a child's malice and humour, by crying "Wilkes and liberty!" at the door of the king's cabinet.

CHAP. III.

1770—1780.

EDUCATION OF THE PRINCE OF WALES AND BISHOP OF OSNABURGH. — ROYAL MARRIAGE ACT. — WAR WITH AMERICA. — DEATH OF LORD CHATHAM.

VARIOUS and minute accounts have appeared in print of the king's domestic life, and parental character, as his family increased. They are now too trite and otherwise worthless to be reproduced. He rose early, lived temperately, was methodical and laborious; but his cares were sometimes trifling, and his labours ignoble. He was not negligent of public business, but it only took its turn with pursuits ridiculously beneath him, — the simplest and lowest processes of mechanics, and reducing to practice the humble literature of "The Farmer's Calendar." The sovereign of a great empire, who cultivates cabbages, mistakes his mission, unless, like Diocletian, he has already resigned it. Yet were these details of the private life and character of George III. put forward, with vain sycophancy, as a reply to the imputed vices of his government.

But the performance of his duties as a parent, at this earlier period, merits great praise. Sickness, with the exception of the small-pox and the hooping-cough, was unknown among his children, now (1770)

four princes and three princesses. The king's system of physical education, if it may be so termed, was of a manly and almost Spartan cast; light and plain clothing, simple diet, rude exercise, and exposure in the open air. The prince of Wales and bishop of Osnaburgh, now respectively eight and seven years old, were alone capable of receiving the rudiments of instruction, and they had already made some progress. Dr. Majendie, English teacher and reader to the queen, gave them lessons in English and Latin; and a Swiss gentleman, named de Salzes, in French and German. Their education also occupied a certain daily portion of the time of the king, who was not an incompetent preceptor at their early age. He had the qualification of reading, it has been said, with propriety and grace, notwithstanding the inelegance of his common enunciation. The queen, too, who spoke tolerable French, performed her part in teaching them that language, German, and even English, which she is said to have spoken and pronounced with ease and correctness, when she was yet but four years in England. She even proved her command of the language by making English verses, some of which were given to the world as the productions of "a very great lady." They are very literal and somewhat foolish effusions of conjugal endearment, which it would be uncharitable to reproduce.

The prince of Wales, having completed his ninth year, was placed with his brother, the bishop of Osnaburgh, under a more regular system of government and education. Lord Holdernesse was appointed governor, Mr. Smelt sub-governor, Dr.

Markham (bishop of Chester) preceptor, and Dr. (then Mr.) Cyril Jackson, sub-preceptor to the princes. These appointments took place in April, 1771. Early in May the prince of Wales's household was formed, and a separate table ordered for the gentlemen composing it. Orders were given at the same time from the lord chamberlain's office, that a chaplain in waiting should regularly read prayers at the queen's house to the prince in the absence of the king and queen, under the direction of the bishop of Chester.

Dr. Markham had been master of Westminster school, Dr. Jackson a tutor at Oxford. Both joined a competent degree of scholarship with the advantage of experience as teachers. A strict system of eight hours' daily application was imposed on the princes, and on the preceptors, by the king. A system less severe might have been more successful, especially with the prince of Wales, whose liveliness of capacity and character had already shown itself. The bishop of Osnaburgh was invested in April with the order of the garter, vacant by the death of lord Halifax; and in the following July, the prince of Wales, the bishop of Osnaburgh, the duke of Mecklenburgh, brother of the queen, and the prince of Brunswick, father of the late queen Caroline, were installed knights of that order, with the usual ceremonies, at Windsor.

An incident in the royal family this year led to a most important act of the legislature, and may be regarded as exercising incalculable influence on the life of George IV. This was the public announcement of two royal marriages, — the marriage of the

duke of Cumberland, the king's second brother, with Mrs. Horton, sister of lord Carhampton, and that of the duke of Gloucester, the king's next brother, with the dowager-countess of Waldegrave. The duke of Cumberland proclaimed his marriage immediately on its taking place; and the duke of Gloucester soon after publicly avowed his with lady Waldegrave, which had been privately solemnised some years before. Both princes were placed under the ban of the court; and the duke of Cumberland received notice from the lord chamberlain that he should not appear at St. James's. It was signified by authority to the ministers, and other servants of the crown; that they must not, under pain of disgrace, visit the duke or duchess of Cumberland.

A royal message early in the next year (1772), containing certain recommendations with reference to marriages in the royal family, was communicated to both houses of parliament, and the royal marriage bill was introduced. This bill, as ultimately passed and now in force, renders the royal family—that is, the descendants of George II. — incapable of contracting marriage without the previous consent of the king for the time being; declares null and void all marriages contracted without such consent; and all persons solemnising or assisting at them to have incurred thereby the pains and penalties of the statute of *præmunire*. The descendants of princesses married abroad are excepted; and the other descendants of George II. being above the age of twenty-five years, having given twelve months' notice, may contract marriage, unless parliament shall, in

the mean time, have expressed its disapprobation. The act sets forth in the preamble that this right has ever belonged to the kings of England; an averment constitutionally and historically false, and negatived by implication in the opinion given by the judges at the time. The bill was resisted vehemently in every stage, and almost at every sentence, in both houses. It was denounced as an outrage upon natural right and morality, the laws of the realm and of God. An energetic protest, embodying the main objections, was entered against it by several peers. Out of doors it was resented as a national indignity, — an insulting sentence of disqualification upon English birth, merit, and beauty; providing, in effect, that no Englishwoman shall sit upon the English throne. All the hardships and mischiefs predicted have not, as yet at least, taken place, but some have occurred which were not anticipated.

This measure was dictated by the private feelings of the king and queen. They could not endure Mrs. Horton as a sister-in-law. That lady, it is true, did not bear her honours with moderation or good taste. She spoke to sir Joshua Reynolds of her condescension in going to sit to him for her portrait at his house, thereby proving only her upstart ignorance of a common and unavoidable royal usage.* Lady Waldegrave, in becoming duchess of Gloucester, seemed only to assume her proper place.

The princess-dowager of Wales, mother of George III., died this year (1772). An object of

* Northcote's Memoirs of Reynolds.

the utmost popular favour before the accession of her son, she more than shared the unpopularity of his government. The public regarded her as the accomplice of lord Bute in suggesting bad measures and worse principles. She died at six in the morning, on the 8th of February. Her physician the night before felt her pulse, and told her it was more regular. "Yes," said she, "I think I shall have a good night's rest." She then embraced her son, it being his usual time of retiring. He remarked that she took leave of him with more than usual emotion. The physician told him in private that she could not outlive the next day. He remained all night, but did not see her alive again. She continued tranquil, and gave no sign of approaching death until the morning, when she placed her hand upon her heart, and expired without a groan.

Nothing was allowed to interfere with the education of the prince of Wales, since its regular commencement. He was kept in a state of much greater restraint and privacy than during his earlier childhood. The violence of opposition and party had now given way, from mere lassitude and hopelessness;—so impassive was the king, and so complaisant were the majorities of parliament. It was, therefore, no longer necessary to excite popular interest and favour by the prince of Wales's appearance at court-balls or in public.

The idle stories of the prince's early genius, and extraordinary proficiency in Latin and Greek, are not worth notice; but it may be presumed, from the severe application to which he was subjected, and his known capacity, that his progress and acquirements were

above the common standard at his years. A translation from one of Cicero's letters made by him at an early age has appeared in print, and is executed with propriety and elegance. But is it likely that the first specimen of a prince's authorship was allowed to appear in print unrevised? His residence was for half the year, or less, at the queen's palace (Buckingham House), and the remainder at Kew. The garden at Kew afforded a safe and healthful promenade, and the two eldest princes had allotted to them in it a small portion which they cultivated. The world has been informed that they not only sowed the seed, tended the crop to its maturity, and gathered the harvest, but passed the grain through its several stages with their own hands, until it became bread, and was presented for breakfast to the king and queen! This anecdote is somewhat improbable in its details: at all events, the initiation of princes in these mysteries of Ceres, as a source of knowledge, was futile, or excusable only as affording exercise and amusement to two secluded children, who had no companions of their own age, and few of the other recreations of boyhood.

A sudden change in the government and education of the two princes took place in 1776. Lord Holdernesse and Mr. Smelt, the bishop of Chester and Dr. Cyril Jackson, sent in their resignations. It appeared to have been a surprise upon the king. Lord Holdernesse has been represented as a nobleman remarkable for his dignity and constitutional principles; and it has been said that he resigned in consequence of finding books of an improper political

tendency placed in the prince's hands by the preceptors, at the instigation of the king. But the charge seems unsupported, and was probably as unfounded as the commendations of lord Holdernesse. That person is described by one of his contemporaries* who must have known him well, as vain, pompous, mediocre, and equally mutable in his principles and his deportment. The facility with which he was willing to betray his colleagues to lord Bute, soon after the king's accession, gives the measure of his integrity. He affected pomp and gravity of manner; but performed some antics in a masquerade, which brought upon him a royal rebuke. The most probable cause of the general resignation is some disagreement between the governor and preceptor, and on the subject of the prince's political reading. A biographical notice of Dr. Markham, published in 1808, states that he experienced "some illiberal opposition." Lord Holdernesse was most probably alluded to, as he alone was in a situation to interfere with the preceptor. Hurd, the successor, gratuitously observes†, that he never had the least difference of opinion with the duke of Montague, governor in his time, respecting the prince's course of study: from which it may be implied, or suspected, that Hurd had in his mind, at the moment, certain differences which did take place between the preceptor and governor who preceded him. All the parties appear to have retained the favour of the king: Dr. Markham was soon advanced to the see of

* Horace Walpole.

† Memoranda left by him in his own handwriting.

York; and lord Caermarthen, son-in-law of lord Holdernesse, was appointed a lord of the bedchamber.

Lord Bruce was named governor to the princes, but resigned, after a few days, "a situation which did not suit his temper or inclination."* He was immediately created earl of Aylesbury, and called to the privy council. His brother, the duke of Montague, succeeded him as governor of the princes. The retirement of lord Bruce has been ascribed to the prince of Wales's detecting and exposing his ignorance of Greek: but the governor had no part in the direct instruction of the prince; and if a critical knowledge of Greek were a necessary qualification for the office, his predecessor lord Holdernesse, and successor the duke of Montague, would have been at least equally incompetent.

The new appointments were, the duke of Montague, governor; lieutenant-colonel Hotham, sub-governor; Dr. Richard Hurd, bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, preceptor; and the Reverend William Arnold, sub-preceptor. Markham and Jackson were of Oxford: Hurd and Arnold of Cambridge. The duke of Montague is described by Hurd as "a person of singular worth and virtue, of the best principles in church and state;" and as having discharged his office "with propriety and dignity." Hurd himself, said to have been the son of dissenting parents, began his career of authorship with whig principles in his Dialogues, and gave a translation of the Greek tyrannicide hymn of Harmodius and Aristogiton, with a sympathy which obtained him the applause of Wilkes—whether in

* Annual Register.

malice or good faith is not quite clear.* But as he became linked more closely with Warburton, and approached St. James's, he "revised and retouched" his whig Dialogues to a more courtly *tone*†, and attacked Hume, in an anonymous pamphlet, with the self-complacent insolence of the school to which he belonged.‡ Yet was he suspected, even to a late period, by the genuine tories. "I am glad," said Johnson, "he did not go to Lambeth; for, after all, I fear he is a whig in his heart."§ The intolerance which would thus put aside a man's words and actions, to scrutinise his heart, is far more odious than Hurd's insincerity, if he was insincere.‖ He, however, obtained confidence and favour with George III. His recast Dialogues made him a bishop, and preceptor to the princes; and the king continued his favour to the end of Hurd's life. Hurd, in the Memoranda already cited, mentions a gold medal presented to him by the king in 1788, having on one side the king's head, and on the other, copied from a seal, "which he *happened* to show the king," a cross, with a scroll, bearing "I. N. R.I.," a glory above, and the motto "ἐκ πιστεως," beneath. The king also presented him with copied portraits of himself and the queen; visited him at his diocese of Worcester, to

* Speeches and Addresses of Mr. Wilkes, 2 vols., printed at his private press.

† Parr, Porson, &c.

‡ Life of David Hume, written by himself.

§ Boswell's Life.

‖ Hurd, in his turn, doubted the sincerity of another prelate: "It is very well, were he but in earnest," said he, speaking of Watson's Reply to Gibbon.—Watson's *Memoirs*.

which he was translated; and gave him a still more conclusive proof of good will, by offering him the see of Canterbury, which Hurd had the moderation to decline.

The prince of Wales appears to have preserved a kind remembrance of both his preceptors. Hurd mentions, with sensibility, a visit made to him in his old age (1807) by the prince, accompanied by the duke of Sussex and lord Lake. The prince, however, entertained more respect for Markham. A recent publication gives on this subject a dialogue between the prince of Wales and Dr. Parr, which the writer professes to have taken down from his revered friend's (Dr. Parr's) dictation.* "I shall introduce the following conversation between his royal highness the prince of Wales and Dr. Parr: it took place at the duke of Norfolk's table, in St. James's square, in the presence of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, lord Erskine, and a large party of distinguished persons. The name of the archbishop of York, who was then in a declining state of health, having been alluded to, the prince observed, 'I esteem Markham a much greater, wiser, and more learned man than Hurd, and a better teacher; and you will allow me to be a judge, for they were both my preceptors.' 'Sir,' said Dr. Parr, 'is it your royal highness's pleasure that I should enter on the topic of their comparative merits as a subject of discussion?' 'Yes,' said the prince. 'Then, sir,' said Dr. Parr, 'I differ entirely from your royal highness in opinion.' 'As I knew them both so intimately,' replied the prince, 'you will not

* Memoirs of Dr. Parr, quoted in "Parriana."

deny that I had the power of more accurately appreciating their respective merits than you have had. In their manner of teaching, you may judge of my estimation of Markham's superiority; his natural dignity and authority, compared with the bishop of Worcester's smoothness and softness; and I now add, with proper submission to your authority on such a subject, his experience as a schoolmaster, and his better scholarship.' 'Sir,' said Parr, 'your royal highness began this conversation, and, if you permit it to go on, must tolerate a very different inference.' 'Go on,' said the prince: 'I declare that Markham understood Greek better than Hurd; for, when I read Homer, and hesitated about a word, Markham immediately explained it, and then we went on; but when I hesitated with Hurd, he always referred me to the dictionary: I therefore conclude he wanted to be informed himself.' 'Sir,' replied Parr, 'I venture to differ from your royal highness's conclusion. I am myself a schoolmaster, and I think that Dr. Hurd pursued the right method, and that Dr. Markham failed in his duty. Hurd desired your royal highness to find the word in the lexicon, not because he did not know it, but because he wished you to find by search, and learn it thoroughly.'"—Parr then entered into a dissertation on the respective characters of the two teachers, with a diffuseness and dogmatism, which, if truly recorded, put the prince's good breeding to a severe trial.

The prince, if this conversation may be relied on, obviously confounded system with ignorance in Hurd, to whom, though somewhat of a pretender to

scholarship, Homer's vocabulary must have been perfectly familiar. But the comparison, in point of method, seems in favour of Markham. Hurd's method, and, as it appears, Parr's also, was hackneyed, vexatious and fatiguing: Markham's, judicious, enlarged, and more efficient with a boy of quick parts, especially the heir to a crown. The prince, accordingly, is supposed to have made less progress with his second than with his first preceptor. He, however, profited by the labours of his instructors and his own, in the ancient classics; in the abstract sciences, at least as far as their application to those arts which a prince may be called upon to employ, and should always be competent to judge; in modern languages and literature; and in the fine arts. He has been represented, by those who approached him, as remembering the ancient classics with a discerning taste. He spoke French, Italian, and German, with facility; and though his familiar letters were somewhat deficient in grace, and even propriety of expression, he wrote and spoke, when he chose, and thought the occasion required it, with ease and dignity.

The rigorous discipline to which the prince was subjected underwent little relaxation as he approached his nineteenth year, on entering which he became of full age, *as heir to the throne.* He, however, began to feel his chains; remonstrated in vain; and made no secret, thus early, of his discontent. The king, unfortunately, was "one of those fathers *de jure scripto*, who treat their children as if they remained stationary in their fifteenth year."* He

* Mirabeau, speaking of his own father: a case somewhat in point.

did not discover his mistake, even at a much later period, when experience should have better informed him. The prince was not allowed to make his first appearance at a court ball until the summer of 1779, and then only at the earnest solicitation of the Spanish ambassador. His intended presence was studiously kept secret, in order that the ball might be thinly attended. But his first essay in the world of fashion and pleasure was now made; and it was publicly announced, that he had acquitted himself "on this trying occasion with the greatest *éclat*." He became still more impatient of control after this essay, and some of the newspapers were made the vehicles of his discontents. They represented him to the public, and to himself, as the victim of a junta. The following paragraph appeared on the 12th of August (his birthday), 1779: — "The prince of Wales, with a spirit of gallantry which does him honour, has three times requested a change in that system which has hitherto environed him. Time will show whether the junta have laid their foundations upon a rock or upon sand." The prince's request was a relaxation of his bondage, and a military commission; both of which were denied him, at a moment when the highest public excitement and enthusiasm prevailed through the nation. To a civil war in America was now added war with France and Spain, and a threatened invasion. Nothing was talked or thought of but armaments, encampments, and reviews. It is easy to conceive the effect of his confinement upon the prince, and its consequences, especially when he gained, as he soon did, his freedom. But

it is necessary to retrace, for a moment, some leading public events; and the appearance on the political scene, of some distinguished persons, whose names are associated with his career. The continuance of the same administration, and the disastrous uniformity of its course, admits of this in a very brief retrospect.

The unhappy ministry formed under the auspices of lord Chatham expired on the 28th of January, 1770, with the resignation of the duke of Grafton; driven, it was said, by the attacks of Wilkes and Junius from his post. This fact, if it be so, would prove only that calumnies can be levelled from the press with as deadly effect as truth and the denunciation of wrong. He was succeeded by lord North, whose name is stamped upon the twelve years of mal-administration which immediately followed.

It has been said for lord North, as for Mr. George Grenville, that he disapproved of the taxation of America, but yielded up his conscience to that unseen and overruling influence, without propitiating which no minister could hold his place. Compromises of this kind are too general to excite surprise. Vulgar obloquy ascribes them to a sordid love of office. They are to be accounted for, more charitably and truly, by that more generous instinctive love of power and conspicuous place, which makes the Turk seek to be the first slave, with the terrors of a savage populace on the one side, and despotism, caprice, and the bowstring on the other. Lord North began with repealing the obnoxious port duties of the preceding ministry, excepting only the trifling duty on tea. The avowed purpose of this exception was

to assert the supremacy of the mother-country;—the real and latent motive was, to satisfy the king by the assertion of a despotic principle. But it was forgotten that, though power may be flattered by a pageant, the badge is not less galling than the yoke to freemen. When pressed to consent to a total repeal, he replied, "America must first lie prostrate at our feet." Something like energy would be expected of one whose pretensions were so high; but his measures exhibit all that is vexatious and irritating, nothing that is vigorous and redeeming, in tyranny.

The first conflict of arms took place at Lexington, within a short distance of Boston, on the 19th of April, 1775. Some discussion arose as to which party first fired. The Americans were organised and arrayed in a state incompatible with political order; and, the contest being inevitable, the first discharge was a matter of indifference or prudence. A second engagement, unexampled for the extent of carnage in proportion to its duration and the numbers engaged, was fought, on the 16th of the following June, at Bunker's Hill, in the neighbourhood of Boston; and the result should have satisfied those who expected revenue from America with the bayonet to her breast, that they should have nothing but blood. Washington was now called to the chief military command. After a protracted and trying series of the hardships and vicissitudes of war, all hope of conquest was extinguished in reasonable minds. The sentiment of independence in the hearts of the Americans from the beginning was now proclaimed by them. Yet did the British

ministry persevere, under a mysterious controlling hand, which was almost avowed in a moment when the sudden news of disaster had thrown Lord North off his guard.* The ministry defended and consoled themselves by tarnishing the reputation of the unsuccessful generals.

This period of ministerial and parliamentary debasement was pre-eminently the æra of British parliamentary eloquence. Never were evil counsels more powerfully and palpably exposed. Lord Chatham, after about two years' retirement for his health, returned in all the lustre of his eloquence and reputation. It would seem as if the virtues and the faculties of this great man were endued with a certain recuperative force, out of the ordinary course of nature. There is something mournful, something which asks a sigh for humanity, in the obscurations of his character and intellectual powers,—something gratulatory and inspiring in his renovated splendour. He now denounced the American war with the fervour of youth and the wisdom of age; and at last, with that prophetic spirit which was supposed in ancient superstition and poetry to manifest itself at the close of life. But, whilst lord Chatham reprobated the war, he opposed as vehemently the independence of America.

The duke of Richmond brought the subject before parliament on the 7th of April, 1778. Lord Chatham, oppressed with years and infirmities, made a painful effort to attend. "I rejoice, my lords," said he, "that the grave has not yet closed upon me,—that I am still alive, to lift up my voice

* Parliamentary Debates, December, 1777.

against the dismemberment of this ancient and noble monarchy." But his predominant sentiment was that mixed one of pride and patriotism, which made the humiliation of the house of Bourbon the great object of his policy and life. "Pressed down as I am by the load of infirmity, I am little able to assist my country; but whilst I have sense and memory, I will never consent to tarnish the lustre of this nation. Shall a people so lately the terror of the world now *fall prostrate before the house of Bourbon?* No: it is impossible!"

The duke of Richmond, in replying, frequently put the question, "Will the noble lord inform us where we are to find men?" Lord Chatham, labouring with the inward tumult of his thoughts and emotions, rose, and, eyeing the duke with ineffable scorn, said, "The noble duke asks where he is to find men: are there no men in England? —Look, my lords, look! there they are!—behind your lordships' bar!"—glancing at the crowd of strangers which seemed to recede from the lightning of his looks.* The effort was too much for him: he fainted in the arms of lord Temple; was borne out of the house; and died on the 11th of the following May. It is to be regretted that he did not expire in the field of his glory. His death and life were truly heroic, if that word be applicable to the virtues and genius of civil life.

Burke, destined soon to be associated with the political life and interests of the prince of Wales, reached the summit of his eloquence, authority, and fame, during this period. But the most pro-

* See Reminiscences of Charles Butler, Esq.

minent figure, and the most closely connected with the subject of these pages, was Charles James Fox; one whose friendship was an honour to the prince, as he was himself to human nature.

Mr. Fox's early career of reckless pleasure is almost as well known as his public life. Returned to parliament a mere youth, he voted for some years with the court and the minister. Deference to the politics of his father, who, it appears, merited all his affection, and possessed it, accounts for, and excuses, conduct so alien to his subsequent character. He, however, during this period, discovered himself occasionally by glimpses of his eloquence and his principles. In 1772 he voted and spoke with the minority on the petition for relief from the obligation to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles, and with the majority in favour of the motion for enlarging the Toleration Act. "By the by," says Gibbon, in one of his letters, "Charles Fox prepared himself for that holy war by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise of hazard. His devotion cost him only about 500*l.* per hour." In 1773 his father relieved him from debts to the amount of 140,000*l.* He was soon again involved as deeply, and his dissipations were as noted in Paris as in London. One of the most remarkable women of the age, then old and blind, madame du Deffand, called by Voltaire "l'aveugle clairvoyante," gives some curious touches of his character as it appeared to her during a visit which he made with colonel Fitzpatrick to Paris, in 1776. "Je ne sais pas bien encore," says she, on his arrival, "comment je trouve le Fox. Il a sans doute beaucoup d'esprit, et sur-

tout beaucoup de talens." In a subsequent letter she appears struck by the reckless facility of his temper. " Je ne comprends pas quels sont ses projêts pour l'avenir; il ne s'embarrasse pas du lendemain: la plus extrême pauvreté, l'impossibilité de payer ses dettes," &c. &c. The two friends dissipated and gamed so extravagantly, that she abandons them as hopeless:—" Je ne saurais m'intéresser à eux: ce sont des têtes absolument dérangées et sans espérance de retour." Another celebrated woman judged him at the same period with greater felicity. " On dirait," says madame Necker, " qu'il a dans sa tête l'ordre qu'il a banni de ses affaires." The death of his father lord Holland, in 1774, untrammelled him in his public principles; and he became henceforth leader of the great popular party, at the head of which he continued to the end of his life.

CHAP. IV.

1780—1783.

APPEARANCE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES AT COURT AND IN THE WORLD. — SECOND ROCKINGHAM MINISTRY.

THE system of excessive control under which the prince of Wales had been brought up, was interrupted at the most critical moment — on his passage from boyhood to manhood. New and paramount duties called away the attention of the king. The combined fleets of France and Spain rode with impunity, if not triumph, in the Channel, in the summer of 1779, and menaced England with invasion. When the French ambassador, de Noailles, had his audience of George III., to notify in form the recognition of the states of America by France, the king said to him, "Quand le roi vôtre maître a signé ce traité, il a surement dû s'attendre aux suites." The Frenchman somewhat negligently replied, "Il y a long-temps qu'il y est préparé;" upon which the king turned on his heel, and the ambassador retired. There was, notwithstanding this notice, a gross want of preparation on the side of England when the war began. But the incapacity of the cabinet was supplied by the spirit and energy of the nation. The militia was called out, the people voluntarily enrolled and armed themselves, encampments were

formed through the country, and the principal seaports echoed with naval preparation. So strong was the opinion of a descent on the English coast, and of the possible seizure of London, that a route was traced for the queen and royal family to the mansion of the duke of Leeds in Yorkshire.

The king, to animate the people and the troops by his presence, devoted much time to visiting the encampments and reviewing the military and naval forces. The two elder princes earnestly petitioned for leave to attend him on those tours of inspection, but without success. Their time was passed between Buckingham house, Windsor, and Kew; and their only share in the spirit stirring movements of the kingdom was, learning fortification and gunnery with their brother prince William, by practical lessons, under two officers, the one military, the other naval, in Kew gardens. The king's absence, and the distractions of public affairs, gave the prince of Wales opportunities of which he availed himself, to escape from his long constraint, now peculiarly irksome. He formed a closer intimacy and associated secretly with some young but more experienced noblemen, who had access to him, and who thus early made him acquainted with the dissipations then prevalent in high life, — especially the vice of gaming.

The king had by this time admitted the dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland to his favour. One day in the summer of 1780, whilst the prince of Wales and prince Frederick were passing through St. James's park, the duke of Cumberland met them in his carriage. The two princes took off their hats to their uncle, who instantly checked his car-

riage, jumped out without waiting for a footman to open the door, ran up to his nephews, and embraced them. It was the first permitted interview the princes had had with him since the royal quarrel; and it is said to have strongly affected the crowd which looked on.

The duke of Cumberland was a good-natured sensualist, with little either of delicacy or understanding. His acquaintance and connections were among the most marked for the fashionable immoralities of the day. A sanctioned and more frequent intercourse now took place between him and his nephew, and the evil consequences were soon apparent.

The dissipated and frivolous example of the count d'Artois at the court of France, also, had its influence on the prince of Wales. In a spirit of rivalry with the French prince, he "launched" as it was expressed "a new shoe-buckle in the beau monde." The regulation measure of the new buckle was "five inches long by one broad, covering the instep so as almost to touch the floor on either side." A schism arose in the "beau monde," the younger part adopting the new and narrow, whilst the elder adhered to the old and orthodox broad buckle.* This incident will appear trivial to the grave reader, but it may be curious to amateurs in fashionable virtù.

* Sheridan, in his alteration of Vanbrugh's "Relapse," has the following hit at the broad buckle, in 1777:—"Formerly the buckle was a sort of machine intended to keep on the shoe; but the case is now quite reversed, and the shoe is of no earthly use, but to keep on the buckle."

The prince of Wales was soon regarded as "the glass of fashion, and the mould of form," in matters relating to the toilet, of which he continued, as every body knows, the great arbiter to the latest period of his life. A well known individual, some time deceased, who was admitted to the prince's familiarity upon his first entrance into life, and for several years after, described or rather dramatised with much humour a scene which he professed to have had from the prince himself. So much depends upon tone and manner, that the spirit of these pleasantries evaporates on paper. The story was in substance as follows: — A new suit, destined for a ball that night at Cumberland house, was brought home to the prince, but ordered back by him for the purpose of undergoing immediate alterations. He gave directions that the tailor's return with it should be instantly made known to him. The prince happened to pass the early part of the evening with the king and queen at Buckingham house. Whilst he was seated in the royal group, a German page entered, and pronounced in a tone meant for his particular ear, but loud enough to be heard by every one present, "Please your royal highness, *she* is come." There was a moment's awful pause. "Who is come?" said his royal highness, in a tone between surprise, embarrassment, and anger. "Sir, she is come," repeated the page, with his bad English and German phlegm. "Eh! what, what! who is come?" exclaimed the king. "*She*, your majesty," reiterated the unmoved German. "She is come!" cried the queen, bursting with wrath, and supposing that the visitor was one

of the house of Luttrell, who already sought an undue influence over the prince. All was for a moment inexplicable confusion. The queen summoned another page, and asked him with fury in her looks, "*Who* is *she* that dares enquire for the prince of Wales?" "Please your majesty," said the second oracle, "it is *Shea*, his royal highness's tailor!"

The prince as yet rarely appeared in public but with the king and queen. George III. loved sacred music, and was frequently present at the Lent oratorios. It was during these performances at Drury-lane, that the prince of Wales's first, or at least first promulgated *liaison* originated, and under the parental eye. The prince's relations with Mrs. Robinson have been the subject of much obloquy upon him, and much false sympathy with the lady. Mrs. Robinson has told her own tale; and, on her showing, it is obvious that she made the prince of Wales no sacrifice of innocence, or even reputation. Delicately as her adventures are gauzed over by herself, it is evident that she no longer had those sacrifices to make, and that she employed artifice to captivate him.

There is, however, something affecting in the previous and subsequent vicissitudes of her life. The daughter of a mercantile or seafaring man named Darby, she passed her childhood in affluence, but was deserted with her mother by her father at an early age, and in distress. Her diversities of situation and suffering as she grew up are neither relevant nor interesting. Having no other resource for her own support and her mother's,—to whom, by the way,

her conduct appears always dutiful and kind,—she resolved to go on the stage. Her début was fixed, and she was receiving lessons from Garrick, when a young man named Robinson, articled clerk to an attorney, inveigled her into marriage, yet without obtaining any interest in her heart. The young attorney imposed on the mother and daughter a false representation of his prospects from a gentleman whom he called his uncle, but of whom he was the natural son. He next employed the same means by which he had obtained his wife, to obtain pecuniary credit. They lived in the world on a grand scale of expense, appearing conspicuously at all places of fashionable resort; the opera, the pantheon, and the subscription-balls; and associating with some of the most noted men of fashion and pleasure. Among these were lord Lyttleton and the notorious George Robert Fitzgerald, whose names alone speak explicitly for this hopeful couple. They were soon, but not so soon as might be expected, overtaken by poverty, and the husband was thrown into jail. Mrs. Robinson, amongst her other indiscretions, composed verses. She had a fund of constitutional vanity and romance, which served the purpose of feeling and fancy; and she wrote "occasional poems" with prettiness and taste. It occurred to her to publish them as the means of relief: she succeeded in her hopes, by their attracting the notice of the duchess of Devonshire, then the enthroned queen of wit, fashion, and benevolence. Mrs. Robinson again bethought her of the stage, and was re-engaged, under the patronage of the

duchess, by Sheridan, who had in the mean time succeeded Garrick. Her husband by some means was released from prison, and they recommenced their old course of vanity and profusion, but with less likelihood of embarrassment. The gay and brilliant intimacies of the wife, and the indulgent temper of the husband, were a public theme. Mrs. Robinson attained no eminence as an actress; but her beauty, her coquetry, more of education and accomplishment than actresses usually have, with a certain charm of manner, gathered round her a crowd of distinguished admirers. Such was Mrs. Robinson at the age of twenty-five or twenty-six, when she contrived to ensnare a prince of eighteen. She describes her first interchange of glances with the prince of Wales as having taken place during the performance of the "Winter's Tale." Perdita, in this play, was her chief character, and her romance with the prince was called that of "Perdita and Florizel." It would appear, however, that she had made frequent assaults previously. "A circumstance of rather an embarrassing nature," says one of the newspapers, "happened at last night's (February 11. 1780) oratorio. Mrs. R——, decked out in all her finery, took care to post herself in one of the upper boxes immediately opposite the prince's, and by those airs peculiar to herself contrived at last so to *basilisk* a certain heir apparent, that his fixed attention to the beautiful object above became generally noticed, and soon after astonished their majesties; who, not being able to discover the cause, seemed at a loss to account for the extraordinary effect. No sooner,

however, were they properly informed, than a messenger was instantly sent aloft, desiring the *dart-dealing* actress to withdraw; which she complied with, though not without expressing the utmost chagrin at her mortifying removal."

This paragraph may not be in all respects true; but it proves that Mrs. Robinson had already begun to throw out her lures to the prince. She has suppressed her preliminary manœuvres, or concentrated them into a single scene.

"The play," says Mrs. Robinson, "of the Winter's Tale, was this season commanded by their majesties. I never had performed before the royal family; and the first character in which I was destined to appear was that of Perdita. I had frequently played the part, both with the Hermione of Mrs. Hartley and of Miss Farren; but I felt a strange degree of alarm when I found my name announced to perform it before the royal family. In the green-room I was rallied on the occasion; and Mr. Smith, whose gentlemanly manners and enlightened conversation rendered him an ornament to the profession, and who performed the part of Leontes, laughingly exclaimed, 'By Jove, Mrs. Robinson, you will make a conquest of the prince; for to-night you look handsomer than ever.' I smiled at the unmerited compliment, and little foresaw the vast variety of events that would arise from that night's exhibition! I hurried through the first scene, not without much embarrassment, owing to the fixed attention with which the prince of Wales honoured me. Indeed, some flattering remarks which were made by his royal highness met my ear as I stood

near his box, and I was overwhelmed with confusion. The prince's particular attention was observed by every one, and I was again rallied at the end of the play. On the last courtesy, the royal family condescendingly returned a bow to the performers; but, just as the curtain was falling, my eyes met those of the prince of Wales, and with a look that I never shall forget he gently inclined his head a second time; I felt the compliment, and blushed my gratitude."

Not satisfied with the execution which she had done from the stage, she took care to cross the prince's path as he was leaving the theatre, and the royal inamorato "made her a marked low bow." The public papers soon announced "that Mrs. Robinson of Drury-lane was seriously indisposed," — the victim, of course, of her hopeless passion: — a correspondence opened between Perdita and Florizel, and her health was restored.

Mrs. Robinson's "memoirs" might with more propriety be called her "romance;" but a romance founded in fact, and allowing truth to escape sometimes unwittingly, even when the scenes have not the probability of well contrived fiction. The following scene is evidently dramatised from her invention, but there appears no ground for questioning the reality of the situation, which should have brought upon the young lord who placed himself in it, if he really so degraded himself, the scorn of mankind: —

"Within two or three days of this time (the night of the grand attack at the theatre), lord Malden made me a morning visit; Mr. Robinson was not

at home, and I received him rather awkwardly." The absence of Mr. Robinson was doubtless very ill-timed, and the lady's consequent awkwardness very natural. She then proceeds:—"But his lordship's embarrassment far exceeded mine: he attempted to speak—paused, hesitated, apologised, I knew not why. He hoped I would pardon him—that I would not mention something he had to communicate—that I would consider the *peculiar delicacy* of his situation, and then act as I thought proper. I could not comprehend his meaning, and therefore requested that he would be explicit." It should be observed, that the noble lord who thus paused and palpitated, whose sense of his own delicate situation and of respect for the lady was so exquisite, had long been ranked among her favoured friends. She then proceeds:—"After some moments of evident rumination, he *tremblingly* drew a *small* letter from his pocket. I took it, and knew not what to say. It was addressed to *Perdita:* I smiled, I believe, rather *sarcastically*, and—*opened the billet.* It contained only a few words, but those expressive of more than common civility: they were signed Florizel. 'Well, my lord, and what does this mean?' said I, half angrily. 'Can you not guess the writer?' said lord Malden. 'Perhaps yourself, my lord,' cried I, gravely. 'Upon my honour, no,' said the viscount; 'I should not have dared so to address you on so short an acquaintance.' I pressed him to tell me from whom the letter came: he again hesitated; he seemed confused, and sorry that he had undertaken to deliver it. 'I hope that I shall not forfeit your good opinion,'

said he; 'but ——' 'But what, my lord?' 'I could not refuse; for the letter is from the prince of Wales." I was astonished — I confess that I was agitated; but I was also somewhat sceptical as to the truth of lord Malden's assertion. I returned a formal and a doubtful answer; and his lordship shortly after took his leave."

A correspondence was soon regularly established; and the prince sent her his picture with the figure of a heart, having on one side, "Je ne change qu'en mourant"—on the other, "Unalterable to my Perdita for life!" No interview had yet taken place, by the lady's account. She proceeds: — "At an interview with lord Malden, I perceived that he regretted the task he had undertaken; but he assured me that the prince was almost frantic whenever he suggested a wish to decline interfering. A proposal was now made, that I should meet his royal highness at his apartments in the disguise of male attire. The indelicacy of the step made me shrink from the proposal." The real secret of Mrs. Robinson's reluctance to meet the prince escapes her as she proceeds. — "*Previous* to my *first* interview with his royal highness, in one of his letters I was astonished to find a bond of the most solemn and binding nature, containing a promise of the sum of 20,000*l.* to be paid at the period of his royal highness's coming of age. This paper was signed by the prince, and sealed with the royal arms; it was expressed in terms so liberal, so voluntary, so marked by true affection, that I had scarcely power to read it; my tears, excited by the most agonising conflicts, obscured the letters," &c. After this "explicit" proof

of the prince's passion, the first "long-dreaded interview" took place. Mrs. Robinson's account of it will, of course, be received only as a specimen of romance. "At length an evening was fixed for this long-dreaded interview. Lord Malden and myself dined at the inn on the island between Kew and Brentford. We waited the signal for crossing the river in a boat which had been engaged for the purpose. Heaven can witness how many conflicts my agitated heart endured at this most important moment! I admired the prince; I felt grateful for his affection. He was the most engaging of created beings. I had corresponded with him; and his eloquent letters, the exquisite sensibility which breathed through every line, his ardent professions of adoration, had combined to shake my feeble resolution. The handkerchief was waved on the opposite shore; but the signal was, by the dusk of the evening, rendered almost imperceptible. Lord Malden took my hand, I stepped into the boat, and in a few minutes we landed before the iron gates of old Kew palace. The interview was but of a moment. The prince of Wales and the duke of York (then bishop of Osnaburgh) were walking down the avenue. They hastened to meet us. A few words, and those scarcely articulate, were uttered by the prince, when a noise of the people approaching from the palace startled us. The moon was now rising; and the idea of being overheard, or of his royal highness being seen out at so unusual an hour, terrified the whole group. After a few more words of the most affectionate nature uttered by the prince, we parted, and lord Malden and myself returned to the island.

The prince never quitted the avenue, nor the presence of the duke of York, during the whole of this short meeting. Alas! my friend; if my mind was before influenced by esteem, it was now awakened to the most enthusiastic admiration. The rank of the prince no longer chilled into awe that being who now considered him as the lover and the friend. The graces of his person, the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious yet manly voice, will be remembered by me till every vision of this changing scene shall be forgotten" . . . "Many and frequent were the interviews which afterwards took place at this romantic spot: nothing could be more delightful or more *rational* than our midnight perambulations. I always wore a dark-coloured habit; the rest of our party generally wrapped themselves in great coats to disguise them, except the duke of York, who almost universally alarmed us by the display of a buff coat. His royal highness the prince of Wales sung with exquisite taste; and the tones of his voice, breaking on the silence of the night, have often appeared to my entranced senses like more than mortal melody: how would my soul have idolised such a husband!" &c. This strain of inordinate vanity and depraved sentimentalism was but too severely disenchanted. Mrs. Robinson at the close of the season retired from the stage; but did not, for some time, appear as the avowed mistress of the prince of Wales. He was still (1780) in a state of pupilage.

This year the metropolis narrowly escaped destruction. An infuriate and atrocious rabble, instigated by a half-crazed yet cunning fanatic, lord George

Gordon, set fire to the city in several places; and would have probably reduced it to a heap of ruins, if the king had not acted with resolution, whilst the magistrates and the ministry seemed paralysed by the crisis. The prince of Wales is stated to have behaved on this occasion with a spirit personally honourable to him, and becoming his relation to the throne. He was at Windsor when the riots took place. As soon as the news reached him of the peril to which the metropolis and the king's person were exposed, he broke away from the authority and entreaties of his governors and preceptors, and hastened to London with the attendance of only one servant and a friend. On his arrival the riots were happily quelled.

The king and queen drank tea at Carlton house, and spent some hours in examining the apartments, in the month of June. It was concluded that this was preparatory to an establishment for the prince, and his residence there after his birthday. But his separate household was not appointed till the 22d of December, and on a scale scarcely deserving the name of an establishment. His governor and preceptor, with their subalterns, were dismissed, and the following noblemen and gentlemen appointed to their respective offices. Groom of the stole, lord Southampton; gentlemen of the bedchamber, earl of Courtown, lord John Clinton, and lord viscount Parker; treasurer and secretary, lieutenant-colonel Hotham (his sub-governor); master of the robes and privy purse, Henry Lyte, esq.; grooms of the bedchamber, honourable Mr. Legge, honourable Stephen Digby, and John Johnson, esq.; first equerry and commissioner of the stables, lieutenant-colonel Lake;

equerries, lieutenant-colonel Hulse, lieutenant-colonel sir John Dyer, baronet, and lieutenant-colonel Stephens. No separate residence was yet allotted to him; and his allowance was so meagre, that the office of treasurer in his household was the subject of pleasantries. The state of retirement and control in which the prince was educated, made him the more impetuous when his fetters were removed, and the world suddenly opened to him with all its fascinations. It appears that the king restricted his allowance on the most absurd of all suppositions — that he must live within it.

His household was chosen by the king himself, without any attention to the recommendations of the minister, or even of the prince. None of the young noblemen who were familiar with him, and regarded as his friends, were appointed. They were said even to have been expressly excepted to. But the appointments were judiciously made, and many of the individuals continued in the prince's service when his choice was no longer controlled.

On the 30th of December, the day after the prince's household was declared, a separation took place, for the first time, between him and prince Frederick, bishop of Osnaburgh. Prince Frederick had been appointed colonel in the army by brevet a short time before, and was now setting out on a tour, chiefly in Germany, to complete his military education. The king's hereditary prepossessions, and the high repute of the Prussian parade at the time, led to this mischievous habit of Germanising English princes. The only Anglo-Hanoverian prince who obtained any military reputation, the

duke of Cumberland, son of George II., had not been sent to Germany, and was supposed to owe his better principles and popularity to his exclusively English breeding. The parting of the two princes is described as affecting, and there is no reason to suspect the accounts given at the time of courtly exaggeration. Two youths, who had been constant and sole companions to each other from their childhood, who were mutually attached, and certainly capable of affection, must at such a moment have felt deeply. The prince had strongly solicited the king to permit his accompanying his brother; but his wish was very properly not complied with, on the alleged ground that it would be an imprudent exposure of him until the restoration of peace, when, probably by way of consoling him, he was told he might visit any countries he pleased. But the liberty which he now enjoyed, though by no means complete, and the pleasures which at every moment surrounded and solicited him, soon banished his regret.

The prince of Wales appeared at court on the queen's birthday, early in the winter of 1781, in his new character of manhood. The most remarkable, at least the most remarked, circumstance in his appearance on the occasion, was a complete change in the fashion of his dress. His new costume, then admired and imitated, would appear not a little grotesque at a subsequent period in his own court. The curious in those matters may be pleased with the description:—"His coat was of pink silk, with white cuffs; his waistcoat of white silk, embroidered with various coloured foil, but adorned with a pro-

fusion of French paste; and his hat was ornamented with two rows of steel beads, 5000 in number, with a button and loop of the same metal, and cocked in a new military style." The king at the same time effected a similar revolution in an humbler sphere, and by compulsory means. He commanded all the domestics of his kitchen to submit their heads to be shaved, and wear wigs, on pain of being discharged; forty are stated to have complied with the royal mandate, — how many proved refractory does not appear. This whimsical royal ordinance is the subject of a well-known humorous poem, bearing a very unpolite title.

Lord George Gordon who had been tried for his share in the riots of the preceding year, and acquitted from the strictness with which the treason laws are very properly construed in favour of the accused, continued his course of eccentric fanaticism. Having published in the shape of a book, a farrago which he called "Scotland's Opposition to the Popish Bill," he addressed a letter to lord Southampton, requesting permission to present it to the prince of Wales. Lord Southampton put him off with an intimation, that the prince not having a court gave no audiences, and was out of town. He wrote to lord North, requesting him to present his book to the king. Lord North replied with his compliments, that if lord George had a book to present he should present it himself at the levee. There is something curious in the epistles of this singular person. To lord Southampton he says, "We *noblemen*, whose ancient families have been so closely related and allied to the royal house

of Stuart, have the eyes of protestant Europe and America fixed upon *us*," &c.; but to the minister he broadly hints the support of " the Scotch division of protestants in London, who (he says), permit me tell your lordship, are very respectable indeed, and numerous too, about 20,000 men, including the train of artillery at Woolwich, and the best part of all the regiments of horse and foot guards. If your lordship was to advise his majesty to compliment them on their discernment and loyalty in opposing the popery bill, I think it would be judicious and in season." Lord North's inditing " his compliments " in reply to this extraordinary piece of shrewdness and madness, is a characteristic instance of that minister's equanimity and good humour. Lord George took his suggestion in perfect sincerity, went boldly to the levee, and was told by the king that " he had nothing to do with him or his book."*

* The subsequent career of Lord George Gordon was one of the most remarkable. Having been excommunicated in form in the church of St. Mary-le-bone, London, he went to Amsterdam, and embraced the religion of the Jews. He soon became so troublesome to the Dutch, that the burgomaster of Amsterdam ordered him to depart in twenty-four hours. On his return to England, he endeavoured to produce riot and reformation at Manchester, but failed, in consequence of his avowed change of religion and length of beard. Finding his extravagancies overlooked, by the forbearance of government, he libelled the queen of France and empress of Russia; was tried, convicted, and sentenced, in the one case to two years', in the other to three years', imprisonment in Newgate. Here he got up petitions for reform of the criminal law from the convicts, and at the expiration of his sentences was brought up to the King's Bench, for the purpose of giving security, and being discharged. He

The prince's appearance at court in the beginning of 1781 was regarded as the signal of his independence. He henceforth directly received and accepted invitations from the nobility. The most splendid of the dinner parties and fêtes to which he was now invited, and those that most influenced his future course, were at Devonshire house, where, to use the classic simile of Moore, "politics sat enthroned, like virtue among the Epicureans, with all the graces and pleasures for handmaids." Here began the intimacy of Fox and Sheridan with the prince of Wales. A grand gala ball of unusual splendour was given in March this year at Devonshire House to the prince of Wales and the princess royal, in which it is most likely that politics shared at least equally with pleasure. Not many days after, lord John Cavendish was chancellor of the exchequer, and Mr. Fox secretary of state.

Lord North finding himself gradually beaten down to a minority on the American war, told the king he could not go on. The king offered to dissolve the parliament; but the minister replied, "that would do his majesty no service." George III. sternly rejoined, "Then you must answer to the country for having gone on so long:"—a most useful lesson

presented himself in a Jewish habit, with a long red beard, and wearing his hat. Upon the officer's removing his hat, with great reluctance on his part, he drew from his pocket a curious nightcap, and placed it with ceremonious gravity on his head. As soon as the effect of this ludicrous exhibition subsided, he was called upon to give security for his good behaviour, and being unprovided and unable to do so, he was sent back to Newgate, where, after a confinement of ten months more, he died of fever.

to ministers who would sacrifice their conviction and their public duty to the private wishes and weaknesses of a sovereign. Many anecdotes were told of the pertinacity with which George III. still contemplated the subjugation of America. Lord Cornwallis, having, on his return after the capture of his army, met with an equivocal reception from lord George Germaine, minister of war, insisted upon knowing at once "what he was to expect, and when he was to be introduced to the king." The minister being pressed by this gallant officer, who had preserved his reputation in defeat, had two long audiences of the king before he could obtain the royal permission to introduce the general. The king received lord Cornwallis at last with "smiling cordiality," and after some preliminary questions, asked him "what force would be sufficient to subdue the rebels?" Lord Cornwallis replied, that he could not determine. "Would 50,000 men and fifty sail of the line do?"—"Upon my honour, I believe not, sir." George III. changed colour at this withering reply.

Finding that he could no longer retain lord North, or rather flinging him away as a broken and inefficient instrument, after twelve years of martyrdom to his political views and personal obstinacy, he tried to form a ministry of which Mr. Jenkinson should be the chief, but in a secondary office. Failing in this, he offered the post of prime minister to lord Shelburne, whose party was far less numerous, and therefore more manageable than lord Rockingham's; and on lord Shelburne's declining, with a wise magnanimity, he submitted, when he could no longer avoid

it, to the appointment of a ministry composed of the Rockingham and Shelburne parties united, with lord Rockingham at its head, and lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox secretaries of state. The prince of Wales, it was said, in some publications of the day, had a direct share in the appointment of the new ministry, but no facts or grounds were stated. Indirectly, he beyond doubt contributed to the change, by the contemptuous tone in which he spoke of the old ministry,—especially of lord George Germaine,—and by using his influence with members of both houses. He declared, at a large supper party, that he thought the king's troops in America could be saved only by their evacuating every town which they occupied there. "But what," said lord Southampton, "becomes, then, of your royal father's honour?" — "Oh that, no doubt, will remain safe where he has very properly deposited it, in the hands of the American secretary, lord George Germaine." Lord George, it will be recollected, had been disgraced by a court-martial for misconduct at the battle of Minden.

The prince of Wales's intimacy with Mr. Fox turned his mind to politics. He frequently sat through a debate of five hours in the house of commons, and was sometimes present at the cabinet councils. It is indisputably true that his connection with the whig party, and its illustrious chief, which now began, favoured his own bias to dissipation. They were almost all persons who indulged in horse-racing, gaming, social pleasures; in short, those fashionable irregularities and chartered vices of high life, which, far from debasing their characters, gave

relief and lustre to their talents, public services, and patriotism. The pursuits of pleasure do not appear to have interfered with the performance of their public duties, or their qualifications to perform them. Their minds were as informed and cultivated as those of the severest moralists, or most plodding students, and they were never absent from their posts. Mr. Fox, when in the ministry, was not charged with neglect of his official duties; and, out of it, he appeared the most regular, earnest, and prepared in the arena of debate; equally conspicuous for the depth and extent of his knowledge, and for the vigour of his dialectics; as if politics formed the all-absorbing devotion of his soul,—whilst at the same time he could treat of the beauties of Italian poetry with an Italian, and discuss a passage in the Greek dramatists with Parr. It should be said of the men of that day, that they were prodigal of life, rather than wasteful of time. They concentrated and expended in a brief compass the mental and vital energies, which they might have economised through a longer period. Those who would look back upon their lives in the spirit of reprobation, may be consoled with the reflection that the race is extinct. But the influence of their society and example upon the habits of the prince has been grossly overcharged by servility, which would throw the odium of his errors upon others; and by party spirit, which would throw any odium on political opponents. He would have contracted debts and found companions in debauchery had his whig friends never existed,—as in truth he did beyond and beneath their sphere,—whilst at the same time he

owed to the converse of those accomplished persons much useful instruction, the exercise of his faculties and fancy, and the cultivation of his tastes.

The prince of Wales was not many weeks out of leading-strings when he already complained of the inadequacy of his allowance. He remonstrated, not only on the ground that his establishment was beneath the dignity of his station, but that he was restricted from that encouragement of science, literature, and the arts, which became a prince, and was most agreeable to his inclination. He had formed, or others had suggested to him, the project of inviting and assembling on particular evenings men of distinguished literary reputation; and thus reviving that communion between royalty and literature which gave lustre to the reign of Anne, and which during the reign of the illiterate George II. was maintained by his enlightened queen. It was also said that he had formed the plan of an "academy of arts and sciences," to be provided with funds and the other facilities necessary for prosecuting experiments and observations, especially in chemistry, astronomy, geography, and botany, at the estimated expense of 40,000*l.* a year. The sanguine temper of youth and the love of honourable distinction may have fixed his mind for a moment on those visions which he was not then allowed to realise, and which never afterwards returned. He demanded of the ministers that the inadequacy of his income should be submitted to parliament before its rising; but this was prevented by the distractions of the cabinet in 1782, and by the strong reluctance of the king.

His life in the mean time was a continued train of dissipation. The authority still exercised over him by the king did not admit of his appearing "on the turf;" but he indulged without control in dresses, equipages, fêtes, private play, and gallantries. His wardrobe alone was said to have cost this year 10,000*l*. Mrs. Robinson now appeared in a style of indecent splendour, rendered still more scandalous by the vile participation of her husband. Her house was openly frequented by the prince and his friends. Though refused admission to good company in private houses, she mingled with the most distinguished on all other occasions. Masquerade-balls by subscription were the fashionable rage of the time. A grand entertainment of this kind was given by the gentlemen of Weltjie's club-house in St. James's street, under the particular direction of the prince of Wales. Nothing was omitted to make the entertainment splendid, and the company brilliant and select. The ball was opened by the prince of Wales and duchess of Devonshire, followed by a long list of the proudest names of the nobility. Yet here, in disgraceful compliance with the pleasure of the prince, appeared Mrs. Robinson. She had the hardihood to appear, and the prince the indiscretion to distinguish her in all public places — at masquerades, the opera, the pantheon, the theatres, the royal hunt in Windsor Forest, and the reviews in the presence of the king. She had a carriage of the kind called a *vis-à-vis*, in which the prince's prodigality and her own disgrace were literally emblazoned; so costly were the materials, workmanship, and ornaments, that the vehicle was "mounted

at the enormous price of 900 guineas; and the lady's cipher, with a rising sun and a lion couchant, shone conspicuous on the door-panels. The effrontery with which she obtruded herself, or, according to her representation, the indiscretion with which she was obtruded by the prince, gave offence to the public and to the king. But the father had, by his want of judicious indulgence, deprived himself of the confidence of his son, and thus lost the dominion which he might have exercised over his more generous feelings.

Mrs. Robinson's career of vicious splendour ceased at the end of about two years. The prince, as he approached his twenty-first year and complete independence, was the object of high-bred coquetry and vicious lures wherever he appeared. The catalogue of his gallantries, real or supposed, according to the scandalous chronicles of the time, would convey worse than valueless information. One, however, was somewhat whimsical, and the subject of the first recorded of those *bon-mots*, of which so many have been attributed to him.* Miss D. had the misfortune to become what the language of our neighbours delicately expresses by the compound word *fille-mère*, and wished to bestow, or rather to force, the honours of paternity on the prince. The subject of dispute having been brought into his presence, he glanced at the child's raven hair, and coolly observed, "to convince me that this girl is mine, you must prove that black is white."

* The trite and spurious witticisms ascribed to George IV., especially since his death, are excluded from these pages.

Mrs. Robinson has given her version of the prince's alienation, and their final parting. A very brief extract will suffice. "The period," says she, "now approached that was to destroy all the fairy visions which had filled my mind with dreams of happiness. At the moment when every thing was preparing for his royal highness's establishment — when I looked impatiently for the arrival of that day in which I might behold my adored friend gracefully receiving the acclamations of his future subjects — when I might enjoy the public protection of that being for whom I gave up all — I received a letter from his royal highness—a cold and unkind letter, — briefly informing me that 'we must meet no more.'" .... "And now, my friend, suffer me to call God to witness, that I was unconscious why this decision had taken place in his royal highness's mind. Only two days previous to this letter being written, I had seen the prince at Kew, and his affection appeared to be boundless as it was undiminished. Amazed, afflicted beyond the power of utterance, I wrote immediately to his royal highness, requiring an explanation. He remained silent. Again I wrote, but received no elucidation of this most cruel and extraordinary mystery. The prince was then at Windsor," &c. She started for Windsor, leaving London at nightfall; escaped the attack of a highway robber on Hounslow Heath, though "her postillion was a child of nine years of age," and "she wore a brilliant in her black stock which the robber could possess only by strangling the wearer." On her arrival the prince would not see her, and "her agonies were indescribable."—"In the anguish of my soul

(continues Mrs. Robinson) I once more adddressed the prince of Wales. I complained, perhaps too vehemently, of his injustice, of the calumnies which had been by my enemies fabricated against me, of the falsehood of which he was but too sensible. I conjured him to render me justice. He did so; he wrote me a most eloquent letter, disclaiming the causes alleged by a calumniating world, and fully acquitted me of the charges which had been propagated to destroy me. After much hesitation I consented to meet his royal highness. He accosted me with every appearance of tender attachment, declaring that he had never, for one moment, ceased to love me; but that I had many concealed enemies, who were exerting every effort to undermine me. We passed some hours in the most friendly and delightful conversation, and I began to flatter myself that all our differences were adjusted. But what words can express my surprise and chagrin when, on meeting his royal highness the very next day in Hyde Park, he turned his head to avoid seeing me, and even affected not to know me!" Mrs. Robinson ascribes her fall not to "a calumniating world," which she says had conspired against her "reputation and peace of mind," but to the triumph of a rival in the person of Mrs. A., a lady who is still living, and who has long borne with credit a name sacred to eloquence, freedom, and humanity. But she wilfully shut her eyes, or, at least, would shut those of others, to the real cause. Mrs. Robinson had before this frequently complained of the prince's neglect, and her complaints led to those reconciliations to which a lover yields the more easily the

greater his indifference. "On a bien de la peine à rompre quand on n'aime plus," says Rochefoucault, who was no mean judge of human nature, and spoke probably from his own experience of his amour with the celebrated duchess de Longueville. The prince felt himself in this predicament, and hence his difficulty to break off, or rather his facility in being reconciled. The "false charges propagated to destroy her," his "eloquent letter," "tender attachment," and "delightful conversation," are to be received as so much romance. Her real crime was, that now "she did not please him," though, unlike Richard, he had too much good breeding to tell her so.

Mrs. Robinson's subsequent history is a melancholy and instructive comment on her past life. Discarded by the prince of Wales, or, according to those whom she called her enemies, before the separation had yet taken place, she commenced a second romance with colonel Tarleton, then distinguished by his courage, enterprise, and cruelties in the American war, and recently arrived from America. One ingredient of romance, wanting in her amour with the prince, had its full share in her affair with the colonel—poverty. She recurred, in her distress, to the prince of Wales for relief, was so coldly received as to be under the necessity of producing the bond, which she had "obscured with her tears" two years before, and cancelled it for a life-annuity of 400*l.*, obtained for her by Mr. Fox. Her next appearance was in Paris, where, by her account, she attracted the notice of the queen Marie Antoinette, who requested from her a miniature of

the prince of Wales which she wore in a bracelet, and returned it next day, with a purse wrought by her own royal hands. This story is improbable, but may be true: the beautiful, unfortunate, and then thoughtless queen of Louis XVI., sometimes forgot her discretion and dignity. The queen's envoy, according to Mrs. Robinson, was the duc de Lauzun, the most unscrupulous and conceited coxcomb in the French court, and therefore capable of imposing on Mrs. Robinson. Another circumstance tells against either her veracity or her knowledge of Parisian society. She boasts of having been introduced to distinguished company by sir John Lambert, the great English banker at Paris. He was a rich voluptuary, whose house was frequented only by men of pleasure, and women called in Paris "*femmes perdues.*" Returned from the continent, she resumed her early vocation of writing "occasional poems," and contributed several to the deluge of impertinence, known as the Della-Cruscan school, in a newspaper called "The World." Among the luminaries, and one of the founders of this silly school, was Merry, whose productions are now forgotten. Just arrived from Florence, the fountain-head of "Della-Cruscan" inspiration, he announced himself by "A Sonnet to Love." Mrs. Robinson replied, and an interchange of vain conceits, and fantastic compliments, was begun under assumed names; the gentleman calling himself "Della Crusca," and the lady "Anna Matilda." Without having yet seen each other, they fell mutually in love, agreed to an interview, and were both disgusted at first sight. After maintaining for some years a sort of commerce of

scribbling verse, and eating suppers with the Della-Cruscan sonneteers, she lost the use of her limbs, died in 1800, neglected and poor, at Englefield Green, and was interred at Old Windsor.

The prince of Wales was assuredly warranted in discarding Mrs. Robinson. She could not plead any sacrifice of innocence or good fame; and as to the supposed "ruin of her peace," her memoirs are at issue on that point with the better evidence of her notorious and uninterrupted gaieties after the separation took place. A connection begun in artifice could hardly have ended in an attachment of passion and the heart. But the gallantry of a gentleman, and the common feelings of a man, should have taught the prince of Wales to secure her from distress. Her settlement of 400*l.* a year, besides being irregularly paid, was, for the most part, intercepted by creditors, whose claims remained unsatisfied; and he who decked her in all the luxury and splendour which wealth could bestow, whilst she possessed youth and charms, left her to struggle with poverty, when she no longer had youth, beauty, or health. This was not generous, but it was natural and consistent. His liberalities, essentially selfish, were conferred for the gratification of his own caprice, and ceased, of course, with the motive which produced them.

CHAP. V.

1783, 1784.

CONNECTION OF THE PRINCE OF WALES WITH MR. FOX AND THE WHIGS. — THE COALITION MINISTRY AND ASCENDANT OF MR. PITT.

THE fashionable season of 1782–3 was proclaimed under the auspices of the prince of Wales and the duchess of Devonshire. It may be said that the higher classes made an equal division of their time between pleasure and politics. A new ball-room was built at the opera house, and called the prince's; the whole interior of the theatre was new modelled, and the boxes were subscribed for on a new system. The performances of the opera were succeeded on Tuesday and Saturday nights by subscription balls, and Thursday nights were devoted to masquerades. None but persons of approved pretensions, in the hierarchy of fashion, were admitted to the balls. The prince of Wales and the duchess of Devonshire opened the first of the series with a minuet, of which "the steps were composed by the inimitable Lepicque, and the music by Giordini." But the masquerades presented a motley assemblage of real as well as assumed character, which bears very instructive testimony to the manners of the age. The mask seems to have been considered a sort of license, and thought to operate

as a talisman against the contagion of indecency and profligacy. Women of the highest rank, and of unblemished names, were mingled with Parisian *intrigantes*, who had migrated to London, either in the train of the duc de Chartres, or speculating on the prodigality of the prince of Wales, noted courtesans, and men of fashion having their mistresses dangling on their arms. If it be true, as some aver, that the state of morals in high life is still the same, and that vice has but retreated from the public eye within the refuge of her proper sphere, public decency at least is improved.

The duc de Chartres, afterwards the unfortunate duke of Orleans, visited London this winter. He was distinguished, as yet, only by his dissipated habits, and a rage for English fashions. His stud, grooms, liveries, and dress, were English; and he was initiated in the mysteries of Newmarket, at the cost, it was said, of 20,000 guineas. On his return to Paris, he communicated his Anglo-mania to the young nobles of his country, who, with the vivacity of their impulses, soon rushed on to the English freedom of language, and sentiments of independence. A frivolous mode, thus imported in the first instance by the duke, was among the most active causes of the French revolution. But here the mention of his name is relevant only as he was connected with the prince of Wales. He formed, what both called, a friendship with the prince, flattered him, by adopting those particular fashions in dress which he had introduced, and obtained his promise of a visit to Paris in the summer. It appears that the prince had set his heart upon this visit, which, to obviate

objections, he proposed to make *incog.*, but the king, very properly in this instance, withheld his consent. So earnest, however, was the prince, that the king offered him permission to make a summer tour of England, or visit Hanover, with a liberal allowance for his expenses.

It was remarked, at this period, of the prince of Wales, that, notwithstanding the vortex of gaiety and pleasure in which he passed his life, he appeared at some moments thoughtful and depressed. This may have been the consequence of excited and exhausted spirits; but it was ascribed to the pressure of his debts, both of law and honour, to a large amount.

The prince's establishment became a matter of consideration some weeks before the completion of his twenty-first year. The moment was particularly unfavourable to him, from the agitation of parties, the fluctuations of the cabinet, and, strange as it may appear, the circumstance of his friends being in power.

Lord Rockingham died in three months after he became minister. His unbending virtue and strong party were little suited to the king's views of government. Lord Rockingham himself was so sensible of the king's dislike, and of the art with which he could disguise it for his purposes*, that it required the most earnest persuasions of Fox, Burke, and the duke of Richmond, to induce his acceptance of office. Lord Shelburne had devoted his life to the studies and acquirements which should

* "Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare," was, according to Dr. Watson, bishop of Llandaff, the great maxim of George III.

make him an accomplished politician, — and with success. He had the eagerness and suppleness of ambition; his party was weak in numbers, though not in talent; and the king offered to place him at the head of the government. He acceded now to the tempting offer which he before had the moderation to decline, — and without consulting his colleagues before he took this decisive step. Mr. Fox, with several other friends of lord Rockingham, immediately resigned. The propriety of Mr. Fox's resignation was much canvassed. He vindicated himself on the ground of serious differences of opinion in the cabinet, especially with reference to the acknowledgment of the independence of America. But it is manifest, even from his vindication, that he wanted confidence in lord Shelburne, and wished to have the duke of Portland, lord Rockingham's successor as head of the whigs, appointed prime minister. The Rockingham and Shelburne parties were essentially distinct; and Mr. Fox, without incurring the charge of jealous rivalry or grasping ambition, might naturally decline acting under a minister with whom he had not an entire unison of principles, and whose aspiring temper and talent were likely to make him exert the supremacy of his place.

Lord Shelburne, the friend and pupil of lord Chatham, inherited that nobleman's opposition to the acknowledgment of American independence, but renounced the opinion soon after he became prime minister. A provisional treaty, acknowledging "the freedom, sovereignty, and independence of the Thirteen United States," was signed in No-

vember, 1782, and preliminary articles of peace with France and Spain were signed in January, 1783.

Mr. Fox now formed his memorable coalition with lord North. This powerful opposition was not the immediate cause of lord Shelburne's resignation. The king, who must of course have expressly sanctioned the recognition of the independence of America, yet could not forgive the minister who had advised and concluded the treaty. The alienation, for ever, of so fair a portion of the inheritance of his crown might well be a source of deep and lasting sorrow to George III. This feeling would have done him credit; but he felt only a rankling petty resentment, which he wreaked, almost childishly, on his own minister, by secretly instructing the corps of janissaries called the "king's friends," to decry the peace in both houses. Lord Shelburne, a man of spirit and honour, instantly and indignantly resigned, leaving the king wholly unprovided. The king's little-minded mortification of lord Shelburne recoiled upon himself, in being reduced to the dire necessity of accepting for his ministers the coalesced parties of Mr. Fox and lord North, which he hated, not because the coalition was odious, but because it was strong.

A ministerial interregnum of a month succeeded the retirement of lord Shelburne. This interval was passed in vain attempts to recompose the government of materials sufficiently feeble or discordant to be a manageable instrument in the hands of the king. At last the coalition ministry was formed, with the duke of Portland first lord of the

treasury, and Mr. Fox and lord North secretaries of state. The prince of Wales had used his influence in their favour; and one of their first objects was the consideration of his establishment, now that he was within a few weeks of completing his twenty-first year. It led to a difference of opinion between the ministers and the king. A statement on this subject was circulated demi-officially, at the time, to the following effect: — The duke of Portland waited on the king some time before the prince became of age; proposed that the prince's allowance should be 100,000*l.* a year; and submitted the names of a few persons, whom he recommended for appointments in the prince's household. The king answered, "in a slight way," that he had no objection; and the minister retired, with, as he supposed, a clear understanding of the king's approbation. Lord Temple (son of Mr. George Grenville) returned soon after from the chief government of Ireland; had a long private conference with the king; and declared that he was ready, if called upon, to take the post of first lord of the treasury, and form an administration. Upon the near approach of the day for which notice had been given in both houses, the duke of Portland again waited on the king, with the message recommending 100,000*l.* a year ready for the royal signature. The minister was not a little surprised when the king informed him that "he could not think of burthening his people, by so large a grant, and encouraging the prince of Wales in his habits of expense, by placing at his disposal so large an income." He further (it was said) expressed his

high displeasure at the intervention of the ministers between himself and his son, and finally declared that the prince's establishment should be only 50,000*l.* a year, to be paid out of the civil list, with the grant of 60,000*l.* as an outfit. The ministry had pledged itself to the prince, that he should obtain an establishment of 100,000*l.* a year, and was near breaking up rather than fail in procuring him an income to that amount; but he disengaged his friends from their promise, and prevented their resignation, by declaring that he wished the question of his establishment to rest entirely with his father.

None but the very simple, or very disingenuous, could have pretended that the king, in reducing the prince's establishment, was governed by a tender consideration of the public burthens, or by a prudent regard for the moral habits of the heir apparent. He must have known well that a fresh charge on the civil list, of which the arrears had already been discharged three times since his accession, and which was now again deeply in debt, must come ultimately on the public, and was therefore a mockery; and, with the experience of the two preceding years, he could scarcely expect that a narrow income would correct or restrain the prince's extravagance. His real and secret motive was, to show the prince that he, and not the minister, had the "voice potential" in this business; to make him feel the consequence of his obnoxious association with Mr. Fox; and, now that he had lord Temple as a resource, to bring the coalition ministers into a situation which might force them to resign. On

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one condition, indeed, the king, it was said, would make the prince's establishment 100,000*l.* a year — that of his marrying. The proposed bride was a niece of the queen. A peremptory refusal was given by the prince.

The heir apparent entered his twenty-second year on the 12th of August, 1783, with a grand household of lords and gentlemen, the repairs of Carlton House, his debts, a taste for magnificence and a love of pleasure exceeding the utmost latitude of his rank and age, — all to be satisfied out of an allowance less by half than he expected to possess. The consequences of this false position were obvious, and should have been avoided. Had the king been a wiser father, he would have consulted, by greater liberality, the morals and reputation of his son, and saved him some bitter pangs of distress and humiliation through many succeeding years of his life.

Carlton House, assigned to the prince for his residence, required alterations and repairs; and he devoted a considerable portion of his attention and time to them. It was said he consulted two ladies, doubtless very competent to advise him, on the furniture and decorations. These were, the duchess of Devonshire and lady Melbourne. An artist named Nuovosielchi, who had distinguished himself by the style in which he had got up the grand fête given to the prince at Devonshire House, was intrusted with the execution of the ornamental parts. The fanciful magnificence with which the prince of Wales proceeded to enlarge, furnish, and adorn Carlton House, was the first display of that extra-

vagant taste in architecture and upholstery which characterised him through life. It has been felt by the people, certainly, as an expensive folly in the man, but scarcely as a vice of government in the sovereign.

The prince went to reside for the first time at Carlton House, and took his seat in the house of peers as duke of Cornwall, in the beginning of November.

Politics and the contests of parties were at this period eagerly pursued by him. He seems to have entered into the views and interests of Mr. Fox with the ardour and generosity which that statesman's principles, disposition, and conversation, were calculated to inspire. After taking the oaths as a peer, and remaining in his place the shortest time that decorum would permit, he retired, to witness in the house of commons the first shock between Mr. Fox and his opponents. It ended in mere skirmishing: no amendment was moved to the address in either house.

Talents, numbers, the influence of office, and the friendship of the heir apparent, could not sustain the coalition. It wanted that essential element of strength in the government of a free people — public respect. Mr. Fox's coalition with lord North was formed in an evil hour. He inflicted by it a wound upon his popularity which did not heal for years, and even then left an unseemly scar behind. His opponents, of course, spared no efforts to render it odious; and they found an armoury ready to their hands in the vehement invectives of Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke against lord North during the conduct

of the war with America. A pamphlet called "The Beauties of Fox, Burke, and North," with their profiles side by side in the frontispiece, and containing the concentrated essence of the former denunciations of lord North by his two associates, was widely circulated. The multitude, which could not comprehend the energy and exaggerations of rhetoric, and the kindling of the passions in debate, execrated the coalition. It disgusted men even the most liberal and enlightened.* It proved a fatal blow, not alone to a particular party at the moment, but to public men for years to come,—by disenchanting the public mind of all political confidence. Who, after this, could regard the strife of parties as any thing but a selfish struggle for power; or patriotism as any thing but a scandalous game played for private ends? There was, however, much delusion artfully and hypocritically cherished by the immediate opponents of the coalition, but conscientiously entertained by the great unsophisticated mass of the people. Almost the whole odium was borne by Mr. Fox, from the natural tendency of men to detract from all great superiorities in their fellow creatures, and from the more marked contrast and effect of every spot upon the brighter orb of his character. But, as affecting him, the charges were, to a great extent, irrational. The compromise was altogether on the side of lord North, who gave his adhesion to Mr. Fox. The cabinet was essentially whig in its measures. Lord North, with his minority and indolence in the cabinet, and his wit, eloquence, and friends in par-

* See Watson's Memoirs.

liament, was but an instrument in supporting the policy of Mr. Fox. Yet this does not acquit Mr. Fox of a great error. He broke a delusion, but a salutary one, the source of public confidence, and the great support of individual patriotism. There are popular errors so nearly allied to virtuous and conservative principles, that it is dangerous to shake them.

The debates in both houses on the opening of the session were little else than invective and vindication on both sides. Mr. Fox defended the coalition and himself with all the energy and adroitness of his dialectics and the happy turns of his wit. A member of the house of commons (Mr. Martin) said, he wished a starling were perched on the right hand of the speaker, to cry "Disgraceful, cursed coalition!" The retort of Mr. Fox does not appear in the published reports of his speeches. He said, he saw no necessity for the starling, when the honourable gentleman himself was so ready and so qualified to perform the duty.

The king was still more hostile to the coalition ministry than the people. Mr. Fox introduced in the first week of the session the measure which proved mortal to his administration, — the famous India bill. The plan was assailed in the house of commons with argument, eloquence, party spirit, and the wealth and interest of a great mercantile corporation; out of the house, with the rhetoric of pamphlets, and the broad humour of caricatures. The great stalking-horse of opposition to it was, that Mr. Fox designed to oust the crown and the company of all Indian power and patronage, for

the purpose of vesting them in a commission of his friends, and thus substantially in himself.* It would be absurd to judge the probable results of this measure from the predictions of violent and interested opponents. The bill, if passed, would certainly have overturned a system; but nothing short of a great original act would effect what he declared was his object, viz. "to annihilate a tyranny unmatched in all the histories of the world, under which thirty millions of men, gifted by Providence with the ordinary endowments of humanity, were groaning." † The diminution of the influence of the crown was a good objection only from courtiers and pensioners: the sacredness of chartered rights, urged in behalf of the company, could not protect tyrannical dominion; and the authority which sent out, in the supreme council, a "Paul Benfield, who should have fatted the region kites" for his misdeeds, could scarcely have been displaced without advantage by a commission, which could offer as a guarantee the virtues of its chief, lord Fitzwilliam. How many such predictions, and still more ominously alarming, have ended in nothing, or in the contrary good!

The bill, notwithstanding a powerful array of talent and violent resistance, was carried triumphantly through the house of commons. It was immediately forwarded to the upper house, and, after encountering

* A popular caricature represented him in splendid Asiatic robes, with the title of Shaw Allum, — carried by lord North as an elephant, — with Burke as trumpeter, proclaiming the successor of Tamerlane and Aurengzebe.

† Mr. Fox's speech on the second reading of the bill.

only some sallies from the duke of Richmond, lord Thurlow, and lord Temple, was read a first time. Lord Thurlow, looking in the face of the prince of Wales, who attended to support the bill, declared, that, "if it passed, the crown of England would no longer be worth a man of honour's wearing."* The trying stage is the second reading. It was ordered to be read a second time on the following Monday (December 15. 1783). The duke of Portland thought, on the morning of that day, that he had a majority of the house secure in his pocket: but ruin was already impending over the bill, and over its authors as ministers. The king had sent for lord Temple, or lord Temple had introduced himself privately to his closet, two or three days before that fixed for the second reading. Lord Temple left the closet with a written card, in the king's own hand, declaring that the king "should deem those who voted for the bill, not only not his friends, but his enemies; and that, if lord Temple could put this in still stronger words, he had full authority to do so." The consequence was, that several peers, chiefly lords of the bed-chamber and other appendages of the court, withdrew their proxies from the duke of Portland only a few hours before the debate; and that the ministers were outvoted on a question of adjournment proposed as an amendment upon that of the second reading. On the following Wednesday the bill was directly rejected by a majority of 95 to 76. The court appeared in a state of ominous movement during the next day, and at the hour of midnight the king sent a messenger to Mr. Fox and lord North,

commanding them "to return their seals of office by the hands of their under-secretaries, as a personal interview would be disagreeable." The seals were accordingly returned, and placed by the king in the hands of lord Temple, who wrote letters of dismissal to the other ministers in the course of the next morning. A new administration was almost immediately formed, having at its head, as first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. William Pitt, second son of the earl of Chatham, who had yet but three years' experience in parliament, and was but twenty-four years of age. The other cabinet ministers were, lords Sydney and Caermarthen, secretaries; Thurlow, chancellor; Howe, first lord of the admiralty; the dukes of Rutland and Richmond, lord privy seal and master-general of the ordnance.

Mr. Pitt had acquired a brilliant reputation and great popularity in his short career. He commenced his public life with the most touching prepossessions in his favour. The magic of his father's eloquence, principles, and death, were still fresh in all men's minds. His own eloquence, different in character, recalled that of his illustrious father by its power. He embodied, proposed, and strenuously advocated, the principles of parliamentary reform, which were first broached, and only broached, by lord Chatham: power had not yet imparted haughtiness, and perpetual conflict harshness, to his character. The union of the first talents and the highest station in the councils of a great people was perhaps unparalleled in one so young. He had filled the important place of chancellor of the exchequer during the short ministry of lord Shelburne;

and, hitherto but the adversary, he is henceforth the rival, of Mr. Fox.

The new minister's situation was environed with dangers and with glory. The first and greatest obstacle was a majority against him in the house of commons, which was urged as tantamount to an opposition of the constitution. Whilst the dismissal of the coalition and the appointment of the new ministry had been pending, two most important resolutions were carried against the crown: one, declaring it a high crime and misdemeanor to report any opinion of the king, with a view to influence votes in parliament; the other, declaring that the house would regard as an enemy any person who should presume to advise his majesty to prevent, or in any manner interrupt, the discharge of its important duties. The object of the latter resolution was to prevent a dissolution of parliament, which, though a hazardous experiment, would naturally be resorted to by the court and the minister. Lord Temple, in reference to the former resolution, caused it to be declared in the house by his brother, Mr. (now lord) Grenville, that he was prepared to meet any charge. But he well knew the charge against him was one of those which, however well-founded, are hardly capable of direct proof against the individual, and he had too high a sense of honour to meet it with a denial. The right reverend biographer of Mr. Pitt, to whom most likely the facts were even personally known, could yet reconcile it to his conscience to call the charge of secret influence and irresponsible advisers "a bugbear." Mr. Pitt retaliated, that if the king's name was used on the one

side, the prince's name was used on the other; and thus admitted the fact. The prince of Wales, however, did not vote on the India bill after the first reading; when the king's feelings became known, he absented himself, with the full concurrence of Mr. Fox.* But, whilst the prince abstained from voting, he took an active interest in the contest of parties, without disguising his wishes and his zeal. The king, on learning that the India bill was rejected by the lords, hastened up to the queen's house from Windsor, and immediately on his arrival had a conversation with the prince. An expression said to have been used by the prince soon after he had left his father's presence, would leave no doubt of the subject and result of the audience. He was reported to have said, that if Mr. Fox was shut out from St. James's, he should always find the doors open to him at Carlton House. It was also stated that the prince manifested his dissatisfaction, on the following day, in a manner so marked as to be scarcely credible, — by driving into and out of the court-yard of St. James's Palace, during the levee, without attending it.

Parliament was now within four days of the Christmas recess. The majority adhered to the dismissed coalitionists. They pressed their advantages with tremendous effect, even in that short period. Mr. Fox began with attacking the recreant lords of the bedchamber in a strain of invective which, even imperfectly as it is reported in his printed speeches, recalls to memory the frank energy and license of the ancient orators, without

* Moore's Life of Sheridan.

their personality or coarseness. "Were I disposed," said he, "to treat the matter seriously, the whole compass of language affords no terms sufficiently strong and pointed to express the contempt which I feel for them. It is an impudent avowal of political profligacy; as if that species of treachery were less infamous than any other. It forfeits their title to the character of gentlemen, and reduces them to a level with the meanest and basest of mankind. It insults the noble, ancient, characteristic independence of the British peerage. It traduces and vilifies the British legislature in the eyes of all Europe, to the latest posterity. By what magic nobility can thus charm vice into virtue I know not, nor wish to know; but I do know, that, in any other thing than politics, and in any other men than lords of the bedchamber, such an instance of perfidy would be branded with infamy and execration." The partisans of the minister took at first a high tone, and held out the threat of a dissolution; but they soon quailed before a vote of the commons, carried in a committee on the state of the nation, for an address to the king, representing the mischiefs and dangers of such a measure, and beseeching him to listen to them, "not to secret and interested advisers." The king in answer assured them, "that he should not interrupt their meeting by any exercise of his prerogative, either of prorogation or dissolution." This language, which seems so explicit, did not satisfy the commons. It was regarded as an equivocation, by which the king's word would be casuistically kept, though they were prorogued or dissolved the next day after their re-assembling. In this temper they

separated, on the 24th day of December, 1783, to meet on the 12th of the following January.

The crown was now directly committed in a contest with the house of commons, for the first time since the Revolution. Mr. Pitt's situation was one of the most trying that can be imagined. Attacked and defeated, he did not dare to resort to the alternative of an appeal to the people. At the threshold of his ministry, and of what to another would have been the threshold of public life, he displayed an astonishing firmness of nerve. Impeachment would assuredly have followed his overthrow, and his success seemed scarcely conceivable. Efforts were made, during the recess, to escape from this state of troubled chaos, by a union of parties. A meeting on the subject took place at the duke of Richmond's, under the auspices of the prince of Wales, who was eager for the restoration of Mr. Fox to office. The first condition proposed by the duke, was the exclusion of lord North, upon which Mr. Fox left the house without a word more.

Parliament re-assembled on the 12th of January. It may be called an awful day. The king was at Windsor, but received expresses every hour, as the debate proceeded on the state of the nation, and did not go to rest the whole night. The prince of Wales remained under the gallery of the house of commons until six in the morning. A new instance of the abuse of the king's name to influence members, stated by general Ross, produced a ferment. The general declared that a lord of the bedchamber (lord Galloway) called upon him to say, with friendly expressions of fear and regret, that "his

name was on the list of Mr. Fox's faction," and that if he joined in the forthcoming vote of censure on ministers, he should be regarded as '*the king's enemy:*' "upon which," said the general, "I remonstrated against such interference with my conscience, and the placing of my name on any such muster-roll." It was known to be a habit of George III. to write in various folios, for an hour after he rose in the morning. This practice was not obviously consistent with his want of facility and taste in any sort of composition; but his manuscripts were only registers of names, with notes annexed of the services, the offences, and the characters, as he judged them, of the respective persons. "In addition," says a publication of 1779, "*to the numerous private registers always kept by the king,* and written with his own hand, he has lately kept another, of all those Americans who have either left the country voluntarily rather than submit to the rebels, and also of such as have been driven out by force; with an account of their losses and services." It is somewhat cruel to lay bare "the bosomed secrets" of any man, even after the grave has closed upon his passions and weaknesses; but if these registers of George III. still exist, and should ever come to light, they will be as curious private memoirs as have ever appeared: they doubtless promoted the remembrance and compensation of losses and services; but they also kept alive his petty long-cherished resentments, — less hurtful to their objects, than injurious to his own character and destructive of his peace of mind.

A rival India bill, introduced by Mr. Pitt, was

rejected, and three votes of disapprobation were passed on the ministry in the house of commons, between the 12th and the 26th of January. With only his own capacity and courage, the king's obstinacy and aversion to his opponents, and the public opinion in his favour, the minister still maintained his ground. Such was the state of actual anarchy and threatening danger, that one member (Mr. Powys) brought forward a conciliatory proposition, with tears in his eyes. The king's feelings were agitated to such a degree as to create the most serious alarm. It would appear, from a conversation reported to have taken place between the queen and lady Egremont, "that he was deprived of his rest, and had not a moment's tranquillity."

The current was running still more fiercely against the obnoxious minister, when he obtained a respite, which, perhaps, was the cause of his salvation. About seventy members of the house of commons, — chiefly of that class of hermaphrodite politicians who call themselves independent, and think they hold the balance when they only turn the scale, as they happen to be seized on by the more fortunate or dexterous party on either side, — held a meeting on the 26th of January, at the St. Alban's tavern. A resolution, proposing a union of the two great parties, and an address, founded on it, to the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt, were agreed to at this meeting. The duke refused to meet Mr. Pitt, unless the latter, in deference to the authority of the house of commons, declared that he was no longer minister. Mr. Pitt refused to resign. "He would not," he said, "quit his post with a halter

round his neck, and his armour thrown away, meanly begging to be received as a volunteer in the ranks of the enemy." * A fourth resolution of censure on his continuance in office, and his sacrificing the public weal to his individual pride, was proposed by Mr. Coke, carried by a majority of 19, and ordered next day, by a majority of 24, to be presented to the king. This had a strong effect upon the court, but without changing its purpose. To smooth away the difficulty of Mr. Pitt's refusal ostensibly, but to gain more time in reality, a compromise was adopted. The king wrote to the duke of Portland, requesting him "to meet Mr. Pitt, for the purpose of forming a new administration on a wide basis, and on fair and *equal* terms." The duke regarded this as a virtual resignation on the part of Mr. Pitt, and agreed to the conference; but first demanded an explanation of what was intended by the word "equal." Mr. Pitt would not explain before their meeting; the duke of Portland would not agree to a personal conference on a preliminary message the terms of which the author refused to explain; and the negotiation broke off on the meaning of a single word. But it was not, as then and since represented, a mere verbal or frivolous dispute. It referred to a point of the utmost importance, — the number of friends which each party should have in the cabinet.

Mr. Pitt said in the house, "that there were some persons with whom he could never act, and who ought to remove themselves out of the way of union." Lord North, obviously pointed at, replied, "that, though not disposed to yield to the prejudice

* Mr. Pitt's speech, Feb. 1784.

or caprice of an individual, he would, by withdrawing his pretensions, do that for his country which he would not do for the minister;" and his generous declaration was received with merited applause. The duke of Portland expressed his willingness still to meet Mr. Pitt, if he was allowed to regard Mr. Pitt's note, proposing the meeting, as a virtual resignation, and was admitted *to receive in person the king's commands to hold the conference.* Both were refused.

The king's refusal to see the duke of Portland affords strong grounds of belief that the overture made to him was an artifice; and the following extract from a recently published letter of the king to Mr. Pitt, whilst the matter was pending, removes all doubt. "Mr. Pitt," says the king, "is so well apprised of the mortification I feel at any possibility of ever again seeing the heads of opposition in public employment; and more particularly Mr. Fox, whose conduct has not been more marked against my station in the empire, than against my person; that he must attribute my want of perspicuity in my conversation last night to that foundation," &c. He, in another letter, describes as "a most unprincipled and desperate faction," those whom he affected willingness to receive into his councils.* This extract is curious, as a proof of the bad faith in which the union was proposed on the part of the king; as an explosion of the king's hatred of Mr. Fox; and as a specimen of the laborious infelicity of the style of George III., when he could no longer use his habitual and homely vocabulary. The great

end of the negotiation — time — was now gained. Mr. Fox's supporters began to drop off as the king's obstinacy continued and the minister's triumph ceased to be hopeless. The coalition obtained fourteen victories in this short and memorable campaign; but their numbers, after the ministerial negotiation, gradually diminished until the 8th of March, when Mr. Fox's celebrated "representation to the king" was carried by a majority of only ONE. This was the last dying effort of the coalition. Notwithstanding the defections by which the numbers were reduced, it must be admitted that the chiefs and the great body of the two combined parties adhered to each other with a generous redeeming fidelity. It was said that lord North had been offered a dukedom as the price of his abandoning Mr. Fox. If this rumour of his incorrupt resistance to the court be doubtful or untrue, he still proved his disinterestedness beyond question, by proposing to renounce his own pretensions when they appeared an obstacle to conciliation. Mr. Fox was equally faithful to lord North. Though both were actuated by motives of personal ambition, it was probably an ambition not sordid or selfish, but, in their view, concurrent with the public good.

Whatever were the merits or demerits of Mr. Fox's India bill, his conviction of its beneficence to distant millions of his fellow-creatures was the mainspring of his conduct in defending it. "I stake," said he, "upon this bill, whatever is most dear to me, whatever men value most; the character of integrity, of talents, of honour, of present reputation and future fame. These, and whatever

else is precious to me, I stake upon the constitutional safety, the enlarged policy, the equity, and the wisdom of this measure. I fear not to say that this bill, whatever may be the fate of its authors, will produce to this country every blessing of commerce and revenue; and that, by extending a generous and humane government over those millions whom the inscrutable decrees of Providence have placed under us in the remotest regions of the earth, it will consecrate the name of England among the noblest of nations." So entirely did he identify with it his "present reputation and future fame," that the "Bill for the better Government of India" is conspicuously introduced as an accessary to his portrait painted by sir Joshua Reynolds. Some have asserted, and others only insinuated, that the bill was altogether Burke's, and that Fox's only share was its introduction and advocacy. But can this be believed, after he unequivocally appropriated it — after Burke proclaimed him to the house of commons and to the world "the author," in that masterpiece of panegyrical portraiture, touched without flattery, but by a friend, which he pronounced at the close of his speech on the introduction of the bill? Subalterns in their class may practise this petty species of harmless collusion, but minds of the first order could never descend to it from their superiority and pride of station.

CHAP. VI.

1784—1787.

CAREER AND EMBARRASSMENTS OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.—PAYMENT OF HIS DEBTS.

RUMOURS were circulated of the king's declared intention to abdicate the throne and retire to Hanover, if the coalition triumphed over him. The bishop of Winchester positively states that such was the king's resolution. But it is more likely that the rumour was disseminated to rally round him those who would be alarmed by such a crisis in the executive government. The king was proud and obstinate, but his heart and soul were in the possession and power of royalty; and no one could temporise with circumstances and his rankling passions, better than he did. The bishop observes, in a note on these transactions, that "had the house of commons gained the ascendancy, as in the time of Charles I., the consequence might have been equally fatal to the constitution." The right reverend politician must have had a strange idea of the constitution, if he thought it would have been preserved by the success of Charles I. in his flagrant acts of lawless and tyrannical violence against the assembled commons of England. It is extraordinary

that any weight should have been given to the hackneyed imputation, that the house of commons pretended to invade the king's prerogative of appointing his ministers. The house of commons cannot appoint; but there is an end of English liberty when the king can keep ministers against the desire of a house of commons possessing the confidence of the people.* This was the weak point of the coalition house of commons; the nation was leagued against it, with the crown and the minister.

Parliament, prorogued on the 24th of March, 1784, was dissolved by proclamation the following day; and the political supremacy of Mr. Pitt, in his long, arduous, sometimes disastrous and sometimes great career, was now begun. The defeat of the coalition was a rout. "It was computed," says the author of the Life of Sheridan, "that no less than 160 of them had been left upon the field, with no other consolation than what their own wit afforded, in the title which they bestowed upon themselves, of 'Fox's martyrs.'" They, however, had one consolation more, in the election, though not the return, of their chief, by the electors of Westminster — the most popular and enlightened constituent body of the kingdom.

The prince of Wales, during these transactions, was much engaged in politics, held levees, and gave splendid entertainments. With an insufficient income, his establishment was on a magnificent footing. His weekly levees at Carlton House were on the same scale as those of the most splendid courts.

* The same idle cry was lately set up in France by the partisans of that imbecile tyrant, Charles X.

A banquet, described as the most costly which had been witnessed in this country for several years, was given by him to "the gentlemen of the St. Alban's" (as they were called), during their efforts to bring about a union of parties, and with the declared view of promoting their endeavours. The dinner was followed by a fancy ball, at which were present all the reigning or rival beauties of the aristocracy. This ball, according to the fashionable chronicles and traditions of that day, "exhibited a scene of magnificence and beauty unparalleled." In this "scene" figure the names of "Devonshire, Duncannon, Melbourne, Campbell, Jersey, Beauchamp, Bunbury, Luttrell, Ingram, Talbot, Howard," with many more, in Persian, Turkish, and Spanish costumes, spangled with gold and precious stones — all now vanished from the scene of life which they adorned, with the royal master of the feast himself, or living only in the image of their beauty, for the contemplation of the curious, in his picture gallery. It was not alone on these grand and ceremonial occasions that ladies were of the parties at Carlton House. The bachelor-prince gave card parties and *petits soupers* to his more select friends of both sexes, one evening in the week. But female right honourables and honourables were then less formal: they played cards, danced, and supped, with the club at Weltjie's. The proud beauties of the houses of Cavendish and Bentinck went round and canvassed, in all the radiance of their rank and charms, the "unwashed artificers" of Westminster for Mr. Fox. The prince himself was a strenuous partisan in this memorable contest, which, after lasting six weeks,

closed on the 17th of May. Whilst Mr. Fox's procession was passing along Pall Mall and St. James's Street, the prince who had attended a review that day at Ascot Heath, rode through the crowd several times in his uniform of colonel of the tenth dragoons, and was received with acclamations. He manifested still more conspicuously the interest which he took in Mr. Fox's triumph, by displaying the "Fox favour and laurel" from his carriage, on his way to a grand dinner given on the occasion the same day at Devonshire House, and by celebrating Mr. Fox's victory a few days after by a fête at Carlton House. The number present at this celebration exceeded 600; the gentlemen wearing "blue and buff," and some even of the ladies dressed in the colours of the party, with the "Fox laurel" on their heads, and the "Fox medal" suspended from their necks. Among these fair partisans were Mrs. Crewe, to whom Mr. Fox's well-known verses are addressed, and Mrs. Sheridan. The company sat down to supper at seven, and began to separate at eight o'clock in the morning! Speeches were made on the occasion by Mr. Fox and the prince. "I should," said Mr. Fox, "be wanting to my public duty, and do the greatest violence to my private feelings, if I did not express, on this proud occasion, my gratitude for the manner in which his royal highness has been pleased to give his countenance to me and to my cause. It is a circumstance of pride and honour, particularly dear to me, that in pursuing the interests of the people I have at the same time gained the approbation of the prince. I assure his royal highness that his favour and kind-

ness have made the deepest impression on my mind; and my return to him shall be, to make it the study of my life, never to counsel his royal highness without having equally in view the interests of the crown and the people, — interests which cannot be severed without injury to both." The prince replied, — "I will not at present speak of my private regard for Mr. Fox: I have entered into his interests from a conviction, not only that his talents are the brightest in the empire, but that his principles are the best, and his motives the purest; and I assure him that the prejudices of those who do not know him shall never alter my personal or political attachment." * Even the personal attachment of the royal speaker was somewhat altered; and as to his attachment to principles, it gave way altogether. But vows made in a meeting of convivial politics, especially by a prince, should be judged and relied on only like those of lovers — because they are as frail.

The duc de Chartres again visited London this spring (1784), and formed a still closer intimacy with the prince of Wales. It was said that he had some difficulty in obtaining permission from Louis XVI. to come to England. He first asked leave during the violence of the contest between the house of commons and the crown; but Louis XVI. peremptorily interdicted his journey, with this observation, — "My cousin, they have confusion and trouble enough in England without you." He, however, succeeded soon after in obtaining leave of absence, by urging the point of honour, that he was engaged to the prince of Wales and several English

* Private letter of an individual who was an active agent in the election, and present at the fête.

noblemen to meet them for the decision of turf bets at the ensuing Newmarket races. Though this unfortunate prince had already conspired, as it has been called, against the French court, with the philosophers, wits, and other reformers, his visits to England were made for mere pleasure. The prince of Wales had now added to his other expenses a racing establishment. He was accompanied to Newmarket by the duc de Chartres and his suite, with a party of English noblemen, among whom were the dukes of Dorset, Queensberry, Devonshire, and Bedford, all having horses entered for the race, or bets depending. Epsom races followed in May; and in the result of these also, the prince of Wales was interested to a large amount. He, however, had the good fortune to be a winner — if good fortune it may be called — to the extent, it was said, of 30,000*l.*

The prince of Wales was so seriously indisposed in the beginning of the summer, that his life was thought in some danger. On his recovery, he went to pass the remainder of the season at Brighton, for the more complete restoration of his health. Here he was soon joined by the duc de Chartres as his guest. The residence of the prince with his suite and friends made Brighton the scene of fashionable resort and gaiety. This season may be dated as the first step in the improvement, and as the origin of the present splendour, of that town. The prince henceforth made it his chosen summer residence. In the following year he commenced the building of a marine lodge, which, by slow degrees, grew to the fantastic magnificence of the Pavilion.

He had now but little intercourse with the king, and was in a state bordering on disgrace at court. His second birthday since his becoming of full age was passed at Windsor with the same absence of gratulation or ceremony as the first.

The hopeless exclusion of the prince's friends, as they were now called, from power, left him wholly free to pursue his pleasures. Whilst the coalition was prosperous, he had influence in both houses, and his thoughts were occupied with public affairs: but now he could scarcely command a vote in his own household, and he shared the unpopularity of the whigs. Addresses of congratulation had poured in upon the court; and Mr. Pitt, on his triumph, was invited to a public dinner in the city of London. On the minister's return in the same carriage with lord Sydney, drawn by a shouting mob, he passed Carlton House. The populace stopped for a moment, and indulged in language and conduct insulting to the prince, whilst Mr. Pitt and lord Sydney were, of course, unwillingly looking on. The prince strongly resented this insult; held the two ministers responsible; and submitted to the king that they should be commanded to apologise to him. It does not appear, however, that any submission was thought necessary on their part by the king or by themselves. But the triumph of Mr. Pitt's city mob was not long unopposed. From Carlton House they proceeded on to Brookes's club-house, for the purpose of attacking whiggism in its citadel. The sedan chairmen at the door of Brookes's, set on by some of the younger and more mischievous members within, or actuated by the spirit

of party, descending even to them, or provoked by the insults of the mob, broke their poles into more convenient and effective weapons, and commenced a desperate attack. Others soon joined them; for the coalition was still strong at the West end. The consequence was, great havoc among Mr. Pitt's followers, and some danger to his person, which he escaped through the interference of the members of the club. His right reverend biographer has given a different version, but the foregoing was in substance the current and more correct representation at the time.

Mr. Pitt might console himself for this popular disgrace by the command of every position of ministerial strength. He had with him assuredly the sense of the people, right or wrong, and a house of commons resulting from the effervescence of the popular favour. He did not, however, trust his power to this strong but mutable basis. Pride was a leading trait in his character, as in that of his father, but very different in kind. Pitt the father, trusting to his transcendent talents, and the consciousness of a noble ambition, disdained to capitulate with the secret cabinet, and was foiled. Pitt the son, with that pride which can crouch in one quarter for the purpose of domineering in another, and taking a lesson, perhaps, from his father's defeat, coalesced with Mr. Jenkinson, upon whom descended directly the mantle of lord Bute. He probably could not otherwise have maintained himself. George III. never gave his frank confidence to any one, excepting, perhaps, lord Bute; and he felt an envious hatred of superior talents. He

looked upon his secret advisers and favourites as the creatures of his will and pleasure; and was less jealous of their ascendancy; whilst he regarded the constitutional ministry as a rival and usurping power.

The new parliament met on the 13th of May, 1784, and an amendment proposed by the opposition was rejected by an overwhelming majority. Mr. Burke, whose industry was indefatigable as his zeal was impassioned, proposed a "representation to the king," which was in substance a defence of the late parliament, or, as he said, its epitaph. It resembled epitaphs, as it contained nothing but eulogy of the deceased; but it was long enough for a memoir; and, when exhibited by the author, appeared so voluminous as to produce a roar of laughter through the house. His able speech was listened to impatiently, and his still more able representation rejected without the courtesy of a single word in reply. Thus completely may reason and eloquence fail of effect when the audience is reluctant or the occasion ill-chosen. The representation, appended by way of note to the historical narrative of the circumstances in the "Annual Register," may be consulted by the curious in politics and the critical in style.

The Westminster scrutiny of this year is, perhaps, the most remarkable incident in the history of English elections. The circumstances were briefly these: — Lord Hood and Mr. Fox had a majority of votes; and the unsuccessful candidate, sir Cecil Wray, demanded a scrutiny. The returning officer granted, not a personal scrutiny by himself, which might have taken place within the time fixed for the return of the writ, but a public examination,

disputed on both sides, which, by his own admission, on being questioned at the bar of the house, might last two years. Mr. Fox, having protested against the returning officer's refusal to make a return within the time specified in the writ, obtained a seat for the borough of Kirkwall, in Orkney, and was scoffed at by Mr. Pitt as a person banished to "Ultima Thule." The minister, however, made another classic allusion, with better taste in every sense, by quoting from Virgil, —

——— "Via prima salutis,
"Quod minimè feris, Graiâ pandetur ab urbe," —

in reference to Mr. Fox's political enmity with the Scotch. The question was brought before parliament early in the session; but the commons were now the mere tools of the minister, who was, unworthily of himself, the instrument of the king's animosity; and the scrutiny was approved. So hostile was the state of public feeling still, to the late parliament and the coalition, and so friendly to the minister and the crown, that this monstrous vote created no dissatisfaction or alarm.

Mr. Pitt introduced his plan for the better government of India, which passed into a law as a matter of course, and constitutes, in its main points, the existing system of Indian government. Its chief novelty was the creation of the board of control, which emanates from the crown, and is changeable at pleasure, instead of being appointed by parliament and for a specific time, as proposed in the bill of Mr. Fox. After voting payment of the king's debts, which, in the course of fifteen years, had now been discharged to the enormous

amount of 1,500,000*l.*, notwithstanding his known parsimony, and his 850,000*l.* a year, the parliament adjourned on the 20th of August, and, after several prorogations, re-assembled on the 25th of the following January. The question of the Westminster scrutiny was revived early in this the second session, and twice decided as before, but with reduced numbers. A third effort proved successful, in spite of the utmost efforts of Mr. Pitt, and the influence of the king. It would seem as if the house had, at last, the grace to be ashamed of an abuse of authority, which violated at once the constitution and the justice due to an individual, and was condemned by not only every constitutional lawyer, but every man of sense and candour in the kingdom.

Mr. Pitt's popularity suffered from his unworthy conduct on the Westminster scrutiny; and his pride was mortified by the humiliation of being left in a minority. But he regained his ground by the vain ceremonial of a motion for parliamentary reform. The motion for reform was not one of those which the minister wished to carry, and it was accordingly rejected.

Early in the next session (March, 1786), Mr. Pitt introduced a measure which commanded eulogy and unanimity, and which was, according to his biographer, "sufficient to immortalise the name of its wise and provident author," — his plan for the redemption of the national debt. If this measure should immortalise the name of Mr. Pitt, it will not be by its success. A Scotch yet simple-minded philosopher, meditating in the studious solitude of his college, anticipated the

more convincing lessons of experience in proving it a delusion *; but it affords one of the many instances in which words are things. It sustained through a long series of years, of danger and difficulty, that powerful but fugitive political agent, called public credit, — from the days of Mr. Pitt and Dr. Price, who promised, the one the redemption of the debt, the other solid globes of gold, out of the marvellous properties of compound interest, down to those of Mr. Vansittart, who some years since laid his profane hands upon the sacred fund; but gave at the same time the consoling certainty of demonstration, that the whole public debt must be paid off in exactly forty-seven years from the time at which he was speaking. Though Mr. Pitt's grand scheme has failed, he re-organised the finances, introduced order and economy in the public accounts, and produced a surplus of revenue, with an ability and skill which should establish his reputation as a financier.

Mr. Pitt, with all his power and popularity, and in spite of influence from the highest quarter, was regarded with dislike by the heir apparent. The prince of Wales, however, passed more time, and seemed on better terms than usual, at Windsor in the autumn of 1785. This increased show of favour was not without an object — as, indeed, few things are — at court. Overtures were made and inducements held out to detach him from the opposition: a twofold proposal was said to have been made to him, — that he should marry a princess of the house of Orange, and publicly countenance the measures of government. On this condition his establishment

* Dr. Hamilton.

would be increased to 100,000*l.* a year, and 200,000*l.* granted for the payment of his debts and completion of the buildings at Carlton House; but the prince's dislike of marriage and of Mr. Pitt was too violent, and his situation had not yet reached the requisite degree of hardship, for compliance. The king spoke much in private at this time with the prince; and the following was reported to have passed in one of their conversations. The father impressed it upon the son that he should regulate his pleasures with a reference only to his station: the prince replied, "Pleasure in my mind belongs not to the man's station, but to the man; and you are yourself the victim of adopting the converse of this proposition: you have never enjoyed one pleasure not within the reach of an affluent private gentleman, nor suffered one pain which has not proceeded from your station." The advice of the father and reply of the son were current among persons in the familiarity of the prince of Wales, and have at least the merit of being characteristic: they exhibit the father merging the man, with his passions, weaknesses, and wishes, in the sovereign; the son equally disposed to merge the sovereign in the gratifications of the man. Whilst human nature continues to be what it is generally found, the latter is by much the less dangerous vice of character in the ruler of a free people jealous of their laws and liberties. Another remark attributed to the prince at the same time, in a conversation with the queen, would prove that he well understood his father's maxims. The queen spoke to him of the injury to the king's government from his son's publicly associating himself with the principles

and party of its chief opponent, Mr. Fox: to which the prince replied, "that proscriptions of persons were both impolitic and unjust, and that the time might arrive when Mr. Fox would be necessary as a check upon Mr. Pitt, if that minister, as it was likely, should grow insolent upon the security of his power." The king some years after had Mr. W. (now lord) Grenville *in petto* with this view; but Mr. Pitt saw his design, and defeated it by recommending and insisting upon Mr. Grenville's elevation to the peerage, — with great reluctance on the part of the king, who thus became wholly dependent on Mr. Pitt in the house of commons.

The security of Mr. Pitt from all competition for power, either among his opponents or his supporters, was a misfortune to the prince of Wales. There were no longer any struggles or questions of party sufficiently immediate and interesting to engage him. His intercourse with the whigs after the Westminster scrutiny was chiefly social; public affairs were abandoned by him, and his habits of extravagance became still more reckless than before. Buildings, banquets, equipages, racing, and other dissipations equally ruinous and more debasing, seemed the great purposes of his life. Carlton House was both the subject and the scene of profuse expenditure: the perpetual extensions and changes of design in building and decoration consumed enormous sums; and splendid entertainments to persons of rank, wit, or reputation alternated with the orgies of vulgar debauchery and gaming. It would seem as if, adopting the flatteries of the day, which compared his career to the Shakspearian youth of Henry V., he thought to complete the parallel by defiling

himself with the intimacy of buffoons and parasites, whose names are not worth recalling from oblivion to contempt. His musical parties should be excepted from the general routine of his prodigal, depraved, or frivolous life: they were on a small scale, but directed with consummate taste and talent. He was himself an accomplished amateur, and endowed with the musical temperament in so remarkable a degree, that he brought away in his memory every bar of the chief airs in an opera which he had heard for the first time: he proved this faculty by singing, without the music, the songs of an opera on the subject of Medea and Jason, the next day after he had heard them. This sensibility to the most enchanting of the fine arts continued to the end of his life.

His equipages and race-horses had now obtained a still higher degree of *éclat*, at a greatly increased expense. He studied to excel in person as a charioteer, if that term may be adopted; and from being the pupil, became the rival of sir John Lade, a person well known for his skill in a manly and inspiring exercise, which is rendered vulgar only by the affectation of vulgar manners. His ordinary equipage in 1785–6 was a phaeton and six, the two leaders managed by a little miniature postillion, and the four remaining horses governed by himself. He performed in four hours and a half the distance between Carlton House and Brighton, in a light vehicle drawn by three horses, one before another, with his little postillion on the foremost, and changing horses only twice. But the turf was the most expensive of his pleasures. Here he had to contend with

desperate, expert, and unscrupulous gamesters. The excellence and speed of his horses did not protect him from loss in a mysterious compound game, of which it may be truly said that "the race is not always to the swift." The duc de Chartres, or rather duke of Orleans (having just succeeded to the wealth and title of his father), came over to England in the spring of 1786; associated as before with the prince of Wales; and excited him to a disastrous rivalry in extravagance. They vied with each other in entertainments to the Jockey Club, which always ended in deep play. The prince was said to have lost a large sum at one of these meetings to the duke of Queensberry, and a heavy bet upon his favourite horse called Rockingham, against a horse belonging to count O'Kelly, owner of the celebrated horse Eclipse. Both losses were, however, the subject of reiterated assertion and denial at the time, and were not authenticated in any subsequent exposition of the prince's affairs.

It could not be matter of surprise to any one who compared the prince's income with his career, that he became deeply involved. The consequence was inevitable, from the disproportion between the scale of his expenses and his allowance. His income was 50,000*l.* a year out of the civil list, 14,000*l.* or thereabouts from estates and royalties in Cornwall, Somersetshire, and Surrey; making 64,000*l.* a year. His outgoings were 20,000*l.* a year for the whole establishment of his court, household, and attendants, 10,000*l.* a year for his table, and 30,000*l.* a year for his carriages and horses; making in all 60,000*l.*, and leaving an excess of income amounting only to 4000*l.*

His embarrassments, as he approached the expiration of the third year of his majority, were notorious. The duke of Orleans, then in England, offered to place his fortune at the prince's disposal, until some favourable change in his affairs should take place. This offer was made through a confidential friend of the prince, and declined through the same medium, in obliging terms, as "involving the honour of England." Such was the version of this transaction circulated at the time, and in substance published in the Annual Register: but a private letter of the duke of Portland, first published in Moore's Life of Sheridan, has been construed as depriving the prince of Wales of the grace of declining pecuniary obligations to a foreign prince, and as proving the negotiation nearly concluded, when the prince and the nation were rescued from disgrace by the interference of the duke and Sheridan. This construction of the letter, however, is not quite fair. It will, on comparing dates, be found in the highest degree probable, that the prince declined, in the first instance, what he subsequently recurred to as a last and desperate resource.

Sheridan, who by this time enjoyed more perhaps than any other person the private confidence of the prince of Wales, took advantage of proceedings in the house of commons relative to the arrears of the civil list, to mention the inadequacy of the prince's income, and his consequent embarrassments: several other members joined him in pressing on the ministers the hardships of the prince's situation. The reply of Mr. Pitt was, that he had received no commands from the king on the subject, and could

not, therefore, interfere; but that he would willingly act in the matter, if he received officially the king's command. Thus encouraged, the prince communicated the state of his affairs to the king, through lord Southampton, his groom of the stole, about the middle of June, 1786. The king received the communication, it was said, graciously, and desired that a statement of the prince's debts should be laid before him. His desire was immediately complied with: and the matter remained under consideration, — at least the prince was kept in suspense, — until the 7th of July, when he received a harsh letter from the king, declaring that he would not, on that or any future occasion, sanction any increase of the prince's income, or the payment of his debts. It should be observed, that the prince appealed to his father, not for private pecuniary aid, but for a recommendation in his favour to parliament. The prince, who had constantly represented the inadequacy of his income, and had reason to suppose that the justice of his representation was admitted even by the king, appeared thunderstruck on receiving this peremptory refusal. The following letters, which now appear for the first time in print, — the one written by a distinguished person then connected with the court, to a nobleman recently deceased, — the other addressed by the prince to the king, will convey the best and fairest representation of his feelings and conduct.

"Enclosed is something to make your heart dance. The whole town take this act of the prince of Wales as they should; friends and foes all cry

out, how great, how noble, how good! As soon as he received the king's letter by lord Southampton, he told him he must think of the answer for some hours; but begged of his lordship not to lose sight of him; that let that answer be what it might, his lordship should be able to assure the king from his own knowledge, that he had not seen or been advised in the writing of the answer by any of those people, friends of his, that had the misfortune of being under his majesty's displeasure. He accordingly, after six hours' thinking, sat down and wrote to the king, telling him his determination of giving up 40,000*l.* a year to the payment of his debts; and immediately followed the blow by the enclosed letter to lord Southampton.* All his horses and carriages are selling off, and have been for a week. I must tell you that the king's letter which lord Southampton delivered was not in very civil terms, telling the prince he neither would then nor ever permit an increase to his income. Yet when the prince had taken his decision, the king sent again for lord Southampton, and wrote to him that *he had not said absolutely he would not pay his debts; but if the prince chose to take a rash step, he must likewise take the consequences.* To this last message it is that the prince wrote to the king the letter a copy of which I send you; and I will likewise tell you, that he wrote it off hand and took no advice. I have no occasion of telling you to give no copies of either, particularly of the last. The first to lord Southampton he had copies made of, and sent to

* A circular to the officers of his household, no longer interesting enough to be presented to the reader.

every one of the prince's attendants, but even so they are not public; but the last nobody has, and its getting about would get the person who trusted me with it into disgrace. Lord Southampton and all the prince's people behaved to him in the most grateful, meritorious, and manly way, except colonel Hotham, who has 1000*l.* a year salary and poundage upon all the others' salaries, which amounted to 500*l.* a year more. This man had the modesty to write to the prince, that it was hard he should lose 500*l.* a year, and begged of his royal highness, as he had determined on diminishing his household, since he was so good as to keep him, to give him an equivalent to make up the 500*l.* a year he lost by his royal highness's resolution. The prince, it is said, means to discard him. You may depend upon all I have told you for truth. The city are up, and there is a deputation to go to the prince in a few days from some great merchants, offering him the sum of 200,000*l.*, which I know he is to refuse. The person to whom one of them went to beg the prince would take no step for a few days, in consequence of this offer which they were arranging, told it me. ——— thinks this offer that is to be made is some job; but, job or no job, its being made and refused must reflect credit and popularity, and upon my life the act is such as may well create love and enthusiasm.

" *To the King.*

" 'SIR,

" 'I have had the honour of receiving your majesty's written message transmitted to me by

lord Southampton, and am greatly concerned that my poor sentiments cannot coincide with those of your majesty, in thinking that the former message which I had the honour of receiving, in your majesty's own hand, was not a refusal. After having repeatedly sent in various applications to your majesty, for two years successively, representing that a partial reduction out of so incompetent an income as mine was to no purpose towards the liquidation of a debt, where the principal and interest were so considerable, I this year humbly requested your majesty that you would be graciously pleased, (having previously laid my affairs before you, sir, for your inspection, and painted them in the distressed colours which they so justly merited) whenever it suited your conveniency, to favour me with a decisive answer; as the various delays which have occurred, through the course of this business, have in reality proved more pernicious to me in the situation in which I have been for some time past involved, than the original embarrassment of the debt. To not only these, but to any future delays, would I most willingly have submitted, had they merely rested upon my own patience; but the pressing importunities of many indigent and deserving creditors (some of them whose very existence depends upon a speedy discharge of their accounts), made too forcible an appeal to the justice becoming my own honour, and to the feelings of my heart, to be any longer delayed. Another consideration is, that any further procrastination might have exposed me to legal insults, as humiliating to me, as I am persuaded that they would be offensive to your majesty. I

therefore, previously to my having the honour of receiving that message to which your majesty has referred me, had determined, that should I not be so fortunate as to meet with that relief from you, sir, with which I had flattered myself, and which I thought I had the greatest reason to expect, I would exert every nerve to render that just redress and assistance to my creditors which I cannot help thinking is denied to me. These are the motives, sir, that have actuated my conduct in the step I have taken, of reducing every expense in my family, even those to which my birth and rank entitle me (and which I trust will ever continue to be the principle and guide of my conduct), till I have totally liberated myself from the present embarrassments which oppress me; and the more so as I am persuaded that such a line, when pursued with consistency, will meet with the approbation of every candid and dispassionate mind.

"'I will not trespass any further on your majesty's time, but have the honour to subscribe myself,

"'Sir,

"'Your majesty's

"'Most dutiful and obedient

"'Son and subject,

"'G. P.

"'July 9th, 1786.'"

The officers of the prince's household were accordingly relieved from their services, with the exception of colonels Hotham, Lake, and Hulse, and Mr. Lyte, who were retained as commissioners to manage the funds set apart for the liquidation of his debts. An advertisement, calling upon the creditors

to present their claims, was dated from Carlton House. The prince's train of domestics was discharged, but with a considerate regard to their services. The apartments of Carlton House were shut up and the furniture covered or cased, with the exception of two or three small rooms reserved for the prince's use. The new buildings were, of course, abandoned in their unfinished and unseemly state. Carlton House, in short, presented as complete a picture of ruined fortunes as can well be imagined. The prince's carriages, carriage-horses, and hunters, were sold at Tattersall's; and his racing stud, brought from Newmarket, was paraded through Pall Mall, St. James's-Street, and Piccadilly, to Tattersall's, by twenty grooms, — a lugubrious cavalcade. This conduct was extolled by his friends as a heroic sacrifice, but condemned, or rather calumniated, by the king's friends, as an explosion of childish spleen designed to mortify his father.* It was, however, a great act of justice in its results to a numerous list of distressed tradesmen; and the only course, consistent with independence and honour, really open to the prince.

The refusal of the king has never been publicly accounted for in any authentic form: it was ascribed by the courtiers to his virtuous indignation at the scandalous nature of some of his son's debts. The prince's friends, on the other hand, referred the king's denial of relief to the prince's refusal to

* "Friends and foes *all* cry out how great, how noble," &c., says the first of the two preceding letters; but the exception would hardly be stated, even in the most private confidence, by a courtier.

associate himself with Messrs. Pitt and Jenkinson, who now formed a coalition, more inconsistent and disgraceful than that of Mr. Fox and lord North. An indecent war of mutual defamation began, on behalf of the father and son, between their respective partisans; the prince's life was ransacked, his errors were exaggerated, and exposed in detail, and his private feelings outraged without reserve or delicacy. He had now formed an attachment of no common kind to a lady, whose name at this period came frequently before the public associated with his. A veil of ambiguity or mystery covered, and still covers, the relations of the prince of Wales with Mrs. Fitzherbert. She received all the respect and exercised all the influence which could belong to rank, character, accomplishments, and manners, in the highest class of society in this country during her intimacy with the prince, and after their separation; and she is still living, surrounded, in her advanced years, with all the consideration which could do honour to the decline of a life the most estimable. Mrs. Fitzherbert was the widow of two husbands, without children by either, and the daughter of a gentleman named Smyth, of reputable birth and fortune in Shropshire. Her first husband was Mr. Weld, the proprietor of Lulworth castle in Dorsetshire; since become the property of a cardinal of that name and family, and the temporary asylum of the exiled king of France, Charles X. Some time after the death of Mr. Weld, she married colonel Fitzherbert, who also died within a year after their marriage. Mrs. Fitzherbert was first married at sixteen, and had still all the graces of beauty and

youth on the death of her second husband. She was brought up abroad, with every advantage of a costly and consummate education. Her beauty had that soft and touching character, the result of fair complexion and blue eyes, which distinguishes English-women abroad, and obtained her the appellation of the angelic English *blonde*. The cousin of lord Sefton, and related to other distinguished families, she lived in a sphere of society in London which necessarily made her acquainted with the prince of Wales. He became enamoured, declared his passion, and was the cause of her retiring to the continent to avoid his importunities. Having remained abroad about three years, she returned to England in 1784. The prince on her return declared the continuance and repeated the sincerity of his attachment, with, it would appear, more success. Their intimacy for some time was known only to the initiated in high life: they moved and met in the same society, apparently on terms rather of formal than familiar acquaintance. The secret was divulged shortly before the prince's quarrel with the king, and base advantage was taken of it to wound the private feelings of the prince where manly feelings are the most vulnerable. It was published and squibbed in various forms, that his embarrassments were caused chiefly by the sumptuous establishment of Mrs. Fitzherbert. Her house was furnished, it was said, in a style of oriental magnificence, and her diamonds exceeded in value those even of the queen; but Mrs. Fitzherbert had herself a considerable private fortune, and the splendour both of her drawing-room and toilet were exaggerated. She was of a catholic

family, herself a catholic; and this was easily turned against the prince of Wales, at a period of religious bigotry and political alarm,— especially in the mind of George III., who seems to have thought that protestant episcopacy was the sole object of the revolution of 1688, and that secret influence, prerogative, and parliamentary corruption, were sanctified by their accordance with the spirit and interests of the high church.

The premature dilapidation of the prince's fantastic structures at Carlton House — in short, his want of funds and of taste —was ridiculed and caricatured; and the hint said to have been given at Windsor, where the king exhibited for the laughter of his courtiers a model of the improvements, which had been sent to him by the prince.

The adverse party retaliated with more effect, as the enemy was really more open to attack. The parsimony and private wealth of the king and queen were coupled with the enormous sums which had been granted by parliament for discharging the king's debts, and with his harsh refusal to relieve the distresses of his son. In the very session of 1785–6, when the prince appealed to him in vain, the civil list was in arrear, or, in other words, the king was in debt, to the extent of 240,000*l.*; and he did not scruple to request "his faithful commons" to charge this deficiency upon "his faithful people." Money to a large amount was stated to be lodged by the king and queen, in the names of certain English and Hanoverian commissioners, in the bank of Venice, and almost every other continental bank of approved security, whilst the king's debts were thrown on the

nation, and whilst the heir apparent was left in a state of degrading poverty. A caricature represented the king and queen coming out of the treasury loaded with money-bags, and the prince accompanying them in the poor habiliments of the prodigal son. The younger sons were all in Germany, with the exception of prince William, who was at sea; the dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland were living abroad from their poverty; the king's want of feeling in depriving himself of the society and disregarding the embarrassments of his eldest son, the only prince of his family then within the realm, was placed in an odious light. A diamond of prodigous value, presented to the king under circumstances somewhat mysterious, as the gift of the Indian personage called the Nizam, by Mr. Hastings, was treated as the present of Mr. Hastings himself, who had recently come home from India, loaded with wealth and imputed crime, for which a parliamentary impeachment was suspended over his head.

The false zeal of vulgar champions in the quarrels of the great affords no fair criterion of the passions or feelings, or the good or bad taste of the principals. It should not be adopted, at least, with regard to the prince of Wales, in this instance. His conduct appeared uniformly decorous and filial, even at moments when his moderation and duty were put to the utmost proof. After resolving to abdicate for a time his state as a prince, he went to Windsor, and communicated to the queen, for the king's information, the precise course which he proposed to follow. The king, who was at Windsor at the time, expressed no wish to see him, and this was tanta-

mount to a refusal. A more decided, and, it may be added, a more discreditable proof of the king's dislike was given shortly after. His life was attempted (if the expression be consistent with the uncertainty of the circumstances, and the insufficiency of the weapon *,) by a mad woman named Margaret Nicholson, on the 2d of August, as he was entering St. James's. The prince, who was then at Brighton, received no notice of an event regarded as so awful and alarming, from the king, queen, or any other person belonging to the court. But, upon being informed of it by a private letter, he hastened to congratulate his father on his safety. The prince was received at Windsor by the queen and the princesses; whilst the king, who was in the very next room, had the unenviable fortitude to deprive himself, at such a moment, of the presence of his son! The obstinacy of his resentment was too odious for defence or palliation; and those whose service it was to lie for him denied it altogether. The affectionate meeting of the father and son, and the family dinner which followed, were blazoned with effrontery in the court newspapers. It can scarcely be considered as an aggravation of this treatment of the prince, that the king and queen absented themselves from Windsor, under pretence of a visit to Oxford, in order to avoid the usual forms of congratulation on the 12th of August, his birthday.

The prince of Wales appeared at this time in a

* It was a knife; but so blunt and thin as to bend when applied to the palm of a person's hand, and wholly incapable of inflicting a wound.

state of poverty which may be called extreme for the heir apparent to the throne. He travelled between Brighton and London in a common post-chaise, and in London was reduced sometimes to the necessity of borrowing the carriage of a friend. A part of the summer was passed by him at Bagshot Lodge, which was lent to him by the duke of Gloucester. At this period, either the duke of Orleans repeated his offer, or the prince of Wales intimated his willingness to accept what he had before declined. Such is the almost conclusive inference from dates. The offer of the duke of Orleans, and the refusal of the prince of Wales, obtained publicity in the month of April; and the duke of Portland's letter to Sheridan is dated the 13th of December. Now, it appears in the highest degree probable, that the failure of the prince's appeal to his father in the interval reduced him to the extremity of then accepting a humiliating favour from which he had shrunk before.

The whole transaction proves two things, — that the delicacy of public independence and private honour is liable, even in the highest quarters, to give way before pecuniary distress; and that George III. violated or misunderstood his prudent duty as a father and as a sovereign.

All intercourse now ceased between the king and the prince of Wales. The son avoided every occasion of appearing in the presence of a father who would not even return his salute. Parliament was opened by the king in person on the 24th of January, 1787; and the house of peers, on his retirement, voted an address on his late happy escape

from assassination. The prince appeared in his place as a peer, to join in the address, but was absent during the presence of the king. A circumstance had occurred which made him apprehend, with good reason, that the king would bow his acknowledgments to the assembled members of both houses in such a manner as to mark his exception of his son. Some days before the opening of the session, the prince of Wales, approaching Hyde Park on horseback, happened to meet general Carpenter, and saluted him; the general bowed in return, and had scarcely done so, when the king, to whose suite he belonged, rode up. The prince instantly checked his horse, and, taking off his hat, saluted his father in a manner the most respectful and submissive. But the monarch passed on without the least notice; thus adding to the want of good feeling, the want, in this instance perhaps still more revolting, of good manners. Two French noblemen, the duc de Lauzun and the marquis de Conflans, rode with the prince at the time. Their presence rendered the rencontre the more mortifying. It is not to be supposed that this estrangement was temporary, or even provoked. Hatred between father and son has been hereditary in the house of Brunswick. George I. had so violent an antipathy to George II. (prince of Wales), that lord Berkeley proposed to rid him of the odious presence of his son by carrying off the prince to America never to return.* George II. as cordially hated

* Papers mentioned by Horace Walpole as having been found by queen Caroline in the cabinet of George I. on the accession of George II.

his son Frederick, prince of Wales; and the hereditary feeling appears to have descended, with some mitigation in degree, to George III.

Public opinion, which, through the whole of this ignoble quarrel, was on the prince's side, now extended to the stronghold of the court and the minister, the house of commons. The prince's situation had the double advantage of appearing honourable to him and disgraceful to the country. His conduct was really calculated to do him credit. He pursued his plan of economy and privacy with perfect steadiness. All his debts not exceeding 50*l.* were paid, with a dividend of nine per cent. on his debts above that sum. So strong was the feeling in his favour, that a representation was made to him on the part of a considerable number of members of the house of commons, setting forth the propriety and probable success of an appeal to the house, or, as it was expressed, "to the justice and generosity of the nation in parliament." This advice was adopted by the prince; and the course of proceeding resolved on after some personal consultation between the prince, his friends, and some members of parliament, who had the weight of private wealth, an important constituency, and a neutral independence of party. It was arranged that a motion on the prince's embarrassments should be made by alderman Newnham, one of the representatives of the city of London, and seconded by Sir W. Lemon, a county member. The motion was to be contingent on the minister's refusal to bring the consideration of the prince's income and embarrassments before parliament in his official capacity.

The opening of the budget stood for the 20th of April. Mr. Pitt was about to proceed with it, when alderman Newnham rose to put, he said, an important question, — "Whether it was the intention of his majesty's government to bring forward any proposition for releasing the heir apparent from a situation of distress which reflected honour on him personally, but disgrace on the country?" The house was full, in anticipation of some movement on behalf of the prince, and the minister's reply was expected with profound silence. Mr. Pitt gave substantially and very briefly the same answer which he had previously given to questions on the same subject, put less formally, without any contingent proceeding in reserve, by Mr. Sheridan. "It was," he said, "not his duty to bring forward any measure on the subject without his majesty's commands; and it remained for him only to add, that the king had not honoured him with any commands in reference to it." The minister's laconic reply was delivered with an air of haughty defiance. Alderman Newnham immediately gave notice of his intention to bring the prince of Wales's embarrassments formally before the house, by a motion, on the 4th of May. There was now every prospect of a hostile discussion. Both parties were equally strenuous in recruiting for their respective sides. The king's influence and his couriers were despatched to muster votes from all quarters, and even a single vote from Ireland *, against a proposition for the relief of the prince. Nothing but the complex and exalted relations of royalty could rescue

* Mr. Orde was summoned from Ireland on the occasion.

such a situation of father and son from being pronounced odious and unnatural. Mr. Pitt's defiance proved, not his security, but his pride and sense of danger. He saw the inert portion of the house of commons receiving its impulse from his opponents; and he employed a resource, of which the use was not creditable, and the failure humiliating, — intimidation. On the 24th of April he asked alderman Newnham what precise course he intended to pursue, — "if the worthy alderman was still determined to force a subject of so much delicacy and novelty before the house?" The alderman, wholly unmoved, made answer, that "he did not force the subject, but the subject forced itself upon the notice of the house and the country; and as to his object, it was simply the liberation of the prince of Wales from his embarrassments, which it appeared the house of commons only was willing and able to accomplish." Mr. Fox observed, that he trusted his majesty's government would relieve alderman Newnham from the necessity of bringing forward his motion. This observation called up Mr. Pitt. He again rebuked what he called the indiscretion of alderman Newnham in pressing forward a question so delicate; and declared that "*from private circumstances within his knowledge*, coupled with his regard for all the members of the royal family, he was most anxious to dissuade the house from entertaining it; but that, however painful to him as an individual, he would discharge his public duty by entering into a full exposition." This threat passed without reply, either from its vagueness, or because the friends of the prince were not prepared by ex-

press consultation with him to challenge the minister to be more explicit. Mr. Pitt's object was obviously to intimidate, and his meaning, though so vaguely conveyed, was well understood. Rumours of an accommodation now prevailed; both parties seemed in mutual fear, each expecting some overture from the other. None was made on either side; and on the 27th of April, alderman Newnham again mentioned the subject:—"Finding," he said, "that nothing was likely to be done by ministers to release him from the necessity of bringing forward his motion, he would state its precise form. It would be a motion for an address to the king, praying his majesty to take into consideration the embarrassed state of the affairs of the prince of Wales, and grant him such relief as his royal wisdom should deem fit, to be made good by the house of commons." Mr. Rolle, member for Devonshire, a staunch supporter of the minister, and the hero of the burlesque poem of "the Rolliad," rose up to warn the alderman from his purpose; "but if the alderman persisted he (Mr. Rolle) should," he said, "feel it his duty to move the previous question upon a motion which he conjured the country gentlemen to join with him in opposing, as *it essentially affected the constitution in church and state.*" Mr. Sheridan called upon him to speak more plainly. "He made this call the more earnestly from the evident connection between the observation of Mr. Rolle and the menace thrown out by Mr. Pitt. The prince of Wales (Mr. Sheridan declared) shrank from no enquiry, however searching. There was no part of his conduct or situation which he wished to conceal. He

(Mr. Sheridan) had the best and highest authority for this declaration, and only regretted that a hostile discussion was not rendered unnecessary by relief from another quarter." Several members entreated the alderman to abandon his notice, but without effect. Mr. Powys, the same from whom the troubles of the coalition had drawn tears, rose "under such agitation," he said, "that he could scarcely speak, and entreated the worthy alderman, as he valued royalty and the house of Brunswick, to abstain, and to apologise to the house for having gone so far." The alderman proved inaccessible both to his advice and pathos. Mr. Pitt again rose. "He should be driven," he said, "by the worthy alderman's pertinacity, *to disclose circumstances which it would otherwise be his duty and most anxious wish to conceal.*" Mr. Sheridan repeated, that "the prince and his friends defied menace, and courted the most minute enquiry into the particulars of his conduct, — that the prince was even ready to answer any questions respecting his conduct and situation, put to him as a peer in his place, — that if no other motive existed, the minister himself, by his ambiguous threat, had created an insurmountable barrier to the abandonment of the motion; and that the prince could no longer recede without dishonour." Mr. Rolle said, that, "like an independent country gentleman, he should have his own way, and, instead of gratifying Mr. Sheridan by any explanations then, would state the danger of the constitution in church and state, when the motion was brought forward." Mr. Sheridan's challenge had a different effect upon Mr. Pitt, whose tone

was now changed. "He thought it necessary," he said, "to declare, that his meaning had been misunderstood; that the disclosures to which he had alluded, concerned only the prince of Wales's pecuniary situation, and a correspondence which had taken place on the subject, *without reference to any thing extraneous.*" This disclaimer of Pitt was regarded as an unworthy subterfuge, when he found, from Sheridan's challenge, that menace was unavailing. No doubt was entertained that the real object of his threat of exposure was the prince's reported marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert. Such a marriage was null and void, by that act for the encouragement of profligacy in the descendants of George II. called the Royal Marriage Act. But "the danger to the church and state" arose from Mrs. Fitzherbert's being a catholic. By the act of settlement, marrying a papist incapacitates for the enjoyment and inheritance of the crown, and absolves the people from their allegiance. Some lawyers were, and probably are, of opinion that this provision of the act of settlement survives in full force, notwithstanding the nullity of marriage created by the royal marriage act; and, on this supposition, a marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, though null and void, would incapacitate the prince of Wales for the succession, and absolve the subjects of George IV. from their allegiance by act of parliament. It is true that an act may be void, and yet incur the penalty of forfeiture; but it is equally true that the enactment, or rather re-enactment from a previous statute, in the act of settlement, contemplated and guarded against valid marriages — and those only,

— by which the catholic wife of the heir or sovereign would legally share the capacities of her husband. Lawyers, however, think they never show their prowess so triumphantly as in bending an act of parliament from its obvious bias into hardship or absurdity. It may be remarked, in passing, with reference to the parliamentary absolution of the people from their allegiance, how self-complacently constituted authorities, temporal and spiritual, respectively arrogate to themselves and deny to each other this absolving power over the allegiance of the people, without deigning to give a thought to the only quarter in which the competency really exists, both of fact and right, — the people themselves.

The threat of disclosing the prince's correspondence was equally unworthy and unavailing. A meeting of the members chiefly engaged in support of the motion of alderman Newnham was held at the house of Mr. Pelham, and attended by the prince. Reference being made to Mr. Pitt's threat of disclosing the correspondence, the prince not only expressed his willingness, but his anxiety, that it should be communicated to the house, as now rendered necessary for his vindication, and authorised those who composed the meeting to state this in their places.

Alderman Newnham again introduced the subject in the house of commons, on the 30th of April, ostensibly to declare that "he was not to be understood as pinned down to the form of proceeding by address," but, in reality, to afford Mr. Fox the opportunity of giving a challenge respecting the letters, and a memorable denial of the prince's

marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert. "An honourable member," said alderman Newnham, alluding to Mr. Rolle, "has talked solemnly and mysteriously of something in my intended motion which affects the constitution in church and state. I call upon him, as a gentleman, to explain what he means." Mr. Rolle did not acknowledge the appeal, and Mr. Fox immediately rose. "He happened," he said, "not to be in the house on a former evening, when his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) had declared on the part of the prince of Wales his royal highness's readiness to submit his conduct — every part of his conduct (said Mr. Fox emphatically) — to any investigation. The prince was willing to give a full account in writing of his debts, and to explain to the king or his ministers any items of which explanation should be thought necessary. The right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) had alluded to a private correspondence of the prince of Wales on the subject of his embarrassments, as being of a nature to render its exposure discreditable or painful to the prince. Now he (Mr. Fox) was authorised to declare the prince's willingness, his anxious desire, to have this correspondence laid before the house; and he would take upon him to assert, that, so far from being injurious to the prince, or to the success of the worthy alderman's motion, it would prove in the conduct of his royal highness as perfect and uniform a picture of duty and obedience as ever was shown from a son to his father, or from a subject to his sovereign. An honourable member (Mr. Rolle) had made mysterious allusions to something '*essentially affecting the constitution in church and state:*' he (Mr. Fox) wished

the gentleman had spoken more explicitly; but he supposed the honourable gentleman alluded to a certain low and malicious rumour, — the wanton sport of the vulgar, — a supposed marriage (Mr. Rolle intimated his assent); a thing (continued Mr. Fox) which not only had not happened, but which was even impossible to have happened. He (Mr. Fox) had authority not only to confirm all that had been said by his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan), but formally to assure the house that the rumour in question was a falsehood, and to declare, on the part of the prince of Wales, that his royal highness was ready to submit to examination this part of his conduct, as well as every other, if consistent with propriety and decency."

The house was deeply, and, it should be added, variously, affected by this authorised and emphatic declaration. It deprived the prince's opponents of their means of intimidating him and alarming the public. But in an assembly, for the most part composed of gentlemen, there were assuredly some in whose minds it did not redound to the honour of the prince.

Mr. Rolle was still unsatisfied. "He knew," he said, "as well as Mr. Fox, that the thing was *legally* impossible; but there were certain modes of evasion, and certain forms, which might be satisfactory to some people." Mr. Fox said, "he thought he had said enough to satisfy every liberal mind, but he would satisfy even the most perverse. When he denied the calumny in question, he meant to deny it as false *in toto*, in every sense of fact as well as law." Mr. Rolle again rose, and asked "whether

Mr. Fox was to be understood as speaking from direct authority?" Mr. Fox answered, "Yes; from direct authority." Mr. Rolle was silent, but, it would appear, unconvinced. Mr. Sheridan and Mr. (now lord) Grey, then a very young man, but already distinguished for his public spirit and eloquence, called upon Mr. Rolle either to declare himself satisfied with the declaration of Mr. Fox, or, if unsatisfied, to put the matter in a train of investigation. Mr. Pitt came to the relief of his subaltern confederate, protesting, with affected warmth and vain pomp, against this demand upon Mr. Rolle, as a violation of the freedom of debate. Mr. Rolle said he should express no opinion; but leave the house to draw its own conclusions. Thus ended this remarkable conversation.

Mr. Rolle was a country gentleman, whose mean understanding passed for homely good sense; whose bigotry was considered honest zeal; and whose rustic breeding was taken by himself, and others like him, for independence. His incredulity was widely shared, and a compliment to the lady; but it placed on the prince of Wales, by implication, the stigma of having made Mr. Fox the unconscious vehicle of a falsehood. The supposition of a marriage, however, was perhaps the less disgraceful to the prince. It was a false denial, on a pressing emergency, which left the lady the testimony and refuge of her own conscience. But the contrary supposition would be an unmanly disclosure, only the more infamous from being true.

The obscurity of this affair may not be wholly dissipated before the present generation has passed

away; but in either alternative, whether the marriage had or had not taken place, the sacrifice of Mrs. Fitzherbert's feelings and reputation, and for the meanest of all considerations — money, — is one of those acts by which a gentleman would be dishonoured irretrievably. Whether aggravated or palliated in a prince, is a question which will be differently judged, according to the different aspects under which royalty is viewed. Selfish gratification has been generally imputed to George IV. This feeling, planted in human nature, is especially cherished in the heir to a throne, by the pomps, vanities, and genuflexions of a court; by the instinct of submission to royalty, which generally prevails in modern communities; and by the overcharged forms and phrases of obedience and inferiority, which are observed in monarchies even the most free. It is difficult for a prince to resist the lesson, perpetually inculcated by his situation, — that the rest of his fellow-creatures were made for his use. The prince of Wales added to this trait of self-indulgence the kindred one of prodigality. It has been said of him, that he never could be made to comprehend the value of money. Even a prince who does not know the value of money is sure to be sometimes in want of it; and when the prince of Wales wanted money, he seems to have forgotten, or not known, the value of honour.

The indignation of the lady on learning the formal disavowal made by Mr. Fox, with the prince's authority, in the house of commons, was no doubt truly stated at the time, and may be easily conceived. Versions of what has passed in a relation

so intimate and private as that which subsisted between Mrs. Fitzherbert and the prince of Wales may be very properly received with distrust; but there is reason to believe that the declared resolution of Mrs. Fitzherbert, to break off with him from that moment for ever, was prevented only by an assurance from him that Mr. Fox had exceeded his instructions, and that his declaration should *be as publicly and authoritatively retracted, as it had been made.* In the mean time, Mrs. Fitzherbert was visited with studious publicity by the duchesses of Devonshire, Portland, and Cumberland, and her station in society suffered no change. Some of the meaner parasites of the prince of Wales attempted to shift the odium of the disavowal from the prince to Mr. Fox; but it is scarcely necessary even to assert, that Mr. Fox's declaration was expressly authorised, and, if it was unfounded in fact, that his good faith was abused: it is equally certain that Mr. Fox resented and complained of the equivocating tone in which the prince of Wales thought proper to speak of this declaration, which had been authorised and dictated by himself.

This day's proceedings alarmed the minister for the result of alderman Newnham's motion; and the 4th of May, for which it stood, was near. He resolved to make overtures of accommodation. It was intimated at Cumberland House, that Mr. Dundas would, with the prince's leave, wait on him. The prince, on being informed of this, replied, that he would receive Mr. Dundas at Carlton House. Mr. Dundas called late in the evening of the 2d of May, and had a long conversation with the prince, which

ended in his asking whether the prince would receive Mr. Pitt himself. The prince assented, and Mr. Pitt waited on him next day. They conversed on the state of the prince's affairs for two hours; and Mr. Pitt departed in possession of a statement of the prince's circumstances, which he pledged himself to lay before the king. Alderman Newnham's motion was fixed for the very next day. Mr. Pitt proceeded from the prince's presence directly to the king's, at Buckingham House; — a cabinet council, which met at nine o'clock, remained sitting till midnight; and at this late hour a written answer was despatched to the prince, stating, in general terms, that "if the prince thought proper to cause the intended motion to be withdrawn, satisfactory arrangements should be made." The house of commons met next day, ignorant to a great extent of the communication of the preceding night. Above 400 members were present; and on Mr. Pitt's taking his place, a profound silence reigned through the assembly. Alderman Newnham rose, and stated that he had the happiness to withdraw his notice, as the motion, which was the object of it, was now no longer necessary. Several members expressed their great joy at this result, by a sort of general allegro movement, which soon took a ridiculous turn. Mr. Drake said, that "as he had joined in deprecating the worthy alderman's motion, so now he added his feeble voice——" here he was interrupted. It so happened, that the honourable member's voice was peculiarly loud and strong, and the good will with which he exerted it at the moment created a tumultuous roar of laughter. Mr. Rolle said, "he

hoped the alderman's conduct was not the result of any dishonourable concession or compromise on the other side." This observation, probably by concert, called up Mr. Pitt to declare, that he too was glad the motion had been withdrawn; *but for his part he could see no reason why it was now less necessary than before;* and as to terms or concessions, he knew of none. The conduct of the highest party in the transaction was uniform and consistent throughout. Nothing was or would be done on the one side except in consequence of steps previously taken on the other. Mr. Fox said, "he should decline any observation which might create division of opinion; but he felt it necessary, after what had fallen from the minister, to say, that the conduct of the other party was equally consistent and explicit."

No approach was made towards retracting or qualifying the denial of the marriage. The prince, however, had made an endeavour to redeem his promise to the lady; but his attempt to extricate himself from the consequences of an unmanly compromise only subjected him to fresh humiliation. His object was, by the use of general or ambiguous phrases on his behalf in the house of commons, to restore the mystery and vagueness which had previously intervened between the public and his relations with Mrs. Fitzherbert. But who should be the medium? With a curious infelicity in his choice as to the success of his application, he asked Mr. Grey to become the organ of a disreputable equivocation. That distinguished person, with the dignity which has alike characterised his youth and age, openly declined and no doubt secretly disdained

compliance.* The prince then resorted to Sheridan, with whom, unfortunately for his fame, every other consideration disappeared before the wishes of the prince; and the result was the following compliment, more dexterously expressed than relevantly introduced, with which Sheridan closed some general common-places and the conversation. "He (Mr. Sheridan) affirmed of another person who had been alluded to, that vulgar folly alone could have persevered in attempting to detract from a character upon which truth could fix no just reproach, and which was in reality, entitled to the truest and most general respect." This illogical, but essentially just compliment, the lapse of a few days, and the natural placability of the sex, reconciled the lady to the chief offender, but she never after opened her lips to Mr. Fox.

The minister's extraordinary denial of his knowing any change of circumstances to account for the abandonment of the motion was immediately reported to the prince of Wales, who wrote a letter to him that very night, demanding an explanation. Mr. Pitt, in reply, requested a conference, and went with Mr. Dundas to Carlton House, at twelve o'clock next day. Sheridan was with the prince when the two ministers arrived. Mr. Pitt expressed his willingness to explain his own conduct, in the presence

* An application was made to a young member of the party, who was then fast rising into the eminence which he has since so nobly maintained; and whose answer to the proposal is said to have betrayed some of that unaccommodating highmindedness, which, in more than one collision with royalty, has proved him but an unfit adjunct to a court. — *Moore's Life of Sheridan.*

of any one whom the prince of Wales should think proper to introduce, but declined entering on the question of the prince's affairs, with reference to any arrangement, in the presence of one who was opposed to the king's government. Upon this, the prince desired Messrs. Sheridan and Dundas both to withdraw, and a long conference took place *tête-à-tête;* at the close of which, the prince, to prevent future misrepresentation or mistake, placed in the minister's hands a written proposal to the following effect: — 1st, That the prince's debts should be paid, at least in part. 2d, That a grant should be made to him for the completion of Carlton House. 3d, That such reasonable increase should be made to his annual income as would prevent henceforth the necessity of his contracting debts." Mr. Pitt took his leave with these propositions, and immediately despatched them to the king at Windsor. The king replied with his own hand, in a letter forwarded by Mr. Pitt to the prince, to the following effect: — 1st, That the king was gratified to find the prince ready to submit his debts to inspection. 2d, That the prince should set forth not only the amount of his debts, but the manner in which each particular debt was contracted. 3d, That the prince should engage not to contract debts in future. 4th, That upon compliance with the foregoing conditions would depend the king's consent to the payment of the prince's debts, or any portion of them. 5th, That the king would not think any increase of income necessary, so long as the prince of Wales remained unmarried."

This counter-project was by no means satisfactory

to the prince of Wales. It was rumoured that the negotiations were broken off, upon the king's inadmissible conditions, and that hostilities were to recommence. The communication to the prince, upon the faith of which alderman Newnham had withdrawn his notice, was spoken of as a manœuvre in the highest quarter, merely to gain time; and Mr. Pitt himself was so disgusted, it was said, with the disingenuousness and finesse which he encountered from the king's reluctance to yield to his son, or his weak fear of being considered the yielding party, that he communicated with the king henceforth on the subject only in writing.

The prince was now obliged once more to array his resources and his friends, and a new mode of annoyance was brought to bear upon the adversary, — a claim for the misappropriation of money. The parallel between the three generations of the house of Brunswick was thus completed: — George I. destroyed two wills, containing pecuniary dispositions in favour of his son George II., who in his turn suppressed his father's will, containing dispositions in favour of his son Frederick prince of Wales. The charge against George III. was, that, instead of rendering to the prince of Wales, on his coming of age, an account, and the proceeds, during his minority, of the prince's hereditary estates, in respect to which he was of full age and entitled from his birth, the king his father had appropriated these revenues to the civil list. It was contended on behalf of the king, that he was entitled to them, for the education and maintenance of the prince during his minority. The legal right has remained undetermined; but,

supposing it established, it was an unseemly strife, from which the king could escape only by merging nature and the father into the calculating alien guardian.* The public announcement, that this "delicate" question would be brought before parliament by Mr. Courtney, one of the prince's law officers, had its influence in bringing the royal mind back to an accommodation. An arrangement accordingly took place in a few days, and Mr. Pitt on the 21st of May delivered a message from the king, recommending a grant of 160,000*l.* out of the civil list, for the payment of the prince's debts, and 20,000*l.* for the repairs of Carlton House. The message also contained the prince's assurance to contract no more debts. An address in pursuance of this message was moved and unanimously agreed to.

"Thus had Mr. Pitt," says his right reverend biographer, "the satisfaction of bringing this delicate business to a termination highly acceptable to all parties." The bishop should have excepted one party, and the most deeply interested — the prince of Wales. He struggled hard against the terms imposed on him. There is reason to believe that the schedule of debts presented to the house was not the same in detail with that which the prince had submitted to the king; and it was understood that debts of honour and gallantry had been kept back altogether, because the king, who was

* Mr. Fox, at a subsequent period, contended that the king was bound to maintain the heir apparent, as well as his other offspring, out of the civil list; and his opinion, as a constitutional statesman, on such a subject, is of more value than that of all the mere lawyers in Westminster Hall.

equally destitute of chivalrous honour and enlarged prudence, would not hear of the discharge of such obligations. But the relief afforded was wholly inadequate, even on the avowed statement of the prince's present debts and future wants. The sum of 20,000*l.* was scarcely one third of the amount necessary to complete the improvements at Carlton House; and the prince's great grievance was the inadequacy of his annual income, which the king refused to increase, with the fatally successful purpose of starving him into marriage. In fine, the consequence of "Mr. Pitt's having the satisfaction of bringing this delicate business to a termination highly acceptable to all parties" was, that the prince of Wales, in a few years after, was reduced to a second bankruptcy of fortune and credit more ruinous than the first.

CHAP. VII.

1787—1789.

THE KING'S ILLNESS.—REGENCY QUESTION.

THE prince of Wales had resumed his state a short time before the question of his embarrassments came before parliament. His change of life was ascribed, most unjustly, to personal impatience of economy and privacy. The partisans of the king thought they exalted his character, and gratified his feelings, by detraction of the prince, who had really adhered with great self-control to his resolution, and departed from it only in compliance with the wishes of his political advisers. He, moreover, it should be observed, resumed his rank without his extravagance. By a conspicuous and well-judged act of self-denial, he abstained from appearing, even as a spectator, at the Newmarket spring races. He visited the theatres frequently, to sound and conciliate public feeling. Oratorios were, at this time, performed at the theatre in Tottenham Court Road. One evening, whilst the queen and princesses were present, the prince of Wales, accompanied by the duke of Cumberland, was observed unexpectedly in a box. Etiquette forbade the usual expressions of applause in the presence of the queen, and a

murmur, more flattering than acclamation, pervaded the audience. So jealous was queen Charlotte of etiquette and her supremacy, that she could not bear any invasion, even in favour of her son. She manifested her ill temper by plying her snuff-box vehemently, and allowing some moments to elapse before she condescended to notice him with a slight nod. The princesses did not dare to acknowledge him until this signal was given.

Carlton House was re-opened for a grand entertainment to the gentlemen who had supported the prince's interests, and was once more the scene of fashion and festivities. Fencing was patronised by him at this time, and a remarkable *assaut d'armes*, as it was termed, took place at Carlton House, before the prince and several of his friends. The chief performers were St. George, Mage, Fabian, and Angelo. St. George was the successful champion, and received a present of a brace of pistols from the prince. But the most remarkable occurrence was the victor's second trial with an amateur in petticoats, that celebrated mystery the chevalier, or the chevalière, D'Eon, who, "though now encumbered with," as she expressed it, "three petticoats, which suited her sex much better than her spirit," not only parried the passes of her antagonist, but touched the professor by what fencers call a *coup de temps*. The prince fenced with the chevalière, and was complimented on his attitudes.

Prince Frederick, who went abroad with the title of bishop of Osnaburgh, and whilst abroad was created duke of York, returned, after an absence of seven years, to England, on the 2d of August this year (1787).

The prince of Wales, on being informed of his arrival, hastened to meet him. Their first interview was at Windsor, in the presence of the royal family. After a moment's pause, during which each surveyed with surprise the change in the person of the other, they affectionately embraced each other. The duke of York did not produce flattering impressions abroad. Mirabeau, who saw him at the court of Berlin, describes him as wanting sense and manner, and as chiefly distinguished by his immoderate indulgence of wine and laughter.

The prince of Wales passed the summer at Brighton, where Mrs. Fitzherbert also resided at this season: their intimacy was now undisguised in public, and recognised in society. The general belief of a private marriage between them was fortified, not weakened, since the denial in parliament. By a tacit understanding, an invitation was sent to Mrs. Fitzherbert, wherever the prince of Wales was expected to give his company.

Theatricals and pony races were their chief amusements at Brighton. Lord Barrymore was the most prominent, both as director and performer in those exhibitions. He exposed himself as Bobadil and Hob, on the stage, for the entertainment of the prince, and of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and for the benefit of the manager. He exhibited himself as a jockey in the pony races, in company with his brother, a French gentleman, married to his sister, and the well-known colonel Hanger. This group of ill-mounted riders was more entertaining as a display of whim and drollery than of horsemanship and speed. The starting-place was opposite Mrs.

Fitzherbert's window on the Steyne: so different was Brighton then from what it is now, in topography, buildings, and population. A still more whimsical sport was introduced, not alone for amusement, but for large betting, — the racing of country girls of the neighbourhood for smocks. These Sussex Atalantas, not sufficiently trained to the course, fell down frequently; each patron was allowed to assist his favourite on her legs; and the prince of Wales and Lord Barrymore were seen running to help up the fallen racers, greatly to the amusement of the multitude. The prince of Wales compromised sometimes, in his pastimes at Brighton, not only his dignity but his safety. He happened, with two or three of his more volatile companions, to accompany to the beach the marquis de Conflans, who was going to embark for France: the vessel was at a short distance from the brink, and the marquis was waiting for a boat, when the prince, taking two of his friends, one by each arm, challenged the marquis, who, for the honour of France, would not be outdone, and all rushed into the water breast-high, until they reached the packet, which received the drenched and shivering Frenchman in a bad plight for the voyage, whilst his English friends regained the beach, and saluted him with a joyous "bon voyage." His practical jokes were sometimes less generous, and in worse taste. A French abbé of high rank, who was of his party at Newmarket, said, by way of joke, that he could make himself understood by fishes, and whisper them out of the water. This absurd gasconade was suggested, by their being at the moment

on the brink of a pond, of which the prince of Wales took advantage to push the abbé into his "proper element." Princes do not jest with other people on equal terms; and George IV. too frequently forgot this. He encouraged familiarity, and resented it, and took gross liberties without tolerating reprisals.

Among the sports of Brighton was that brutal practice, which not only leads to vice and crime, but is fit in itself, as a mode of combat, only for the lowest stage of savage life—boxing. It was at this period fashionable in England, on race courses, and even on the theatrical stages of the metropolis, patronised by commoners, nobles, and princes. The influence or example of his uncle the duke of Cumberland brought the prince of Wales to degrade himself by witnessing these exhibitions; but his better taste and natural humanity prevented his taking in them any other interest than that of fashion; and a contest of the sort at Brighton, which proved fatal on the spot to one of the savages engaged in it, so shocked him, that he declared he would never again encourage or be present at such a spectacle.

Prince William arrived at Plymouth on the 27th of December, commanding the Pegasus frigate, after a long absence, and experiencing a remarkable thunder-storm, which tore the sails, and shivered the mainmast, on his passage from Cork. He found himself in disgrace on his return, in consequence of having overdrawn his money bills. The excess of the young prince's expenditure over his income was accounted for in the same manner as his elder brother's, by the insufficiency of his allowance, and

his vindication was borne out by a fact. He was allowed only 1200*l.* a year for his table as captain of a frigate,—after admiral Digby had been allowed 1000*l.* a year for his table as a midshipman. This accords with the king's character; he was parsimonious to the members of his family and in his own habits, but prodigal in personal favouritism and parliamentary corruption. The common crowd was artfully reconciled, by his barren parsimony in the one case, to his oppressive prodigality in the other, and to the frequent discharge of the arrears of the civil list. Prince William was refused leave to quit his ship at Cork, for the purpose of visiting Dublin; and at Plymouth, the absence of invitation from the king, or leave from the admiralty, apprised him that his presence was not desired at Buckingham House. The prince of Wales and duke of York joined and passed some days with him at Plymouth, which for the time was enlivened by festivities and illuminations. Prince William could not obtain leave to quit his ship; but it was said that, like a true sailor, he consoled himself by falling in love. The object of his supposed affection was a young lady named Wynne, the daughter of a merchant. He was passing his time very agreeably at Plymouth, when a sudden order sent him to sea again, in command of the Andromeda, with admiral Gower. The motive of this order was to separate him from the lady, and a trick was at the same time played upon him by the admiralty. His ship, when he sailed, not being provided for a foreign station, he supposed himself going only on a short cruise. When the day came for the separation of the Andromeda

from the squadron, he was informed, that his destination was the West Indies, and that, to prevent the delay of his returning for stores, the Andromeda should be provided from some of the other ships, which "had luckily brought out the proper supply." He obeyed the signal for parting, walked the quarter-deck in no very tranquil mood, "muttered a prayer or two," with more energy than devotion, for the first lord of the admiralty, and ordered the master to direct his course for Antigua.

Where the passions are impetuous, they admit no mean between strict control and reckless freedom: so at least it appeared in the character and conduct of the prince of Wales. Whilst the pressure of his debts and his formal resolution governed his actions, he practised economy with a degree of self-control which created surprise; but upon finding himself liberated by the house of commons he became more extravagant than ever. The king, with the hope of piquing him into better behaviour, or from some other motive in which comparative merit had no share, professed to centre "the hopes of the family" in the second prince; but the duke of York, decidedly inferior in capacity and acquirements, appears by his return from Germany only to have supplied the prince of Wales with an accomplice in his irregularities. It should not be omitted, that, to the credit of both brothers, this parental preference generated no bad feeling between them. The prince of Wales referred to it humorously in one instance. It happened that the duke of York, at a convivial party, rising abruptly from the table, lost his equilibrium, either from the effect

of accident or wine, and fell upon the floor; upon which the prince of Wales rose from his chair, and exclaimed, in a mock heroic tone, "There lie — as our royal father says — the hopes of the family."

The duke of Orleans made his periodical visit to the prince in the spring of this year. It has been said, that he never spoke to the prince of Wales after his offer of a loan was rejected, or rather the negotiation broken off. The facility of temper and character which was the source of all those errors, expiated by him on the scaffold with the fortitude of a sage, would alone be a probable refutation in the absence of fact. But he met and was received by the prince of Wales with their usual cordiality; and a brilliant dinner-party was given at Carlton House to greet him on his arrival. The duke of Orleans lived on terms of great intimacy with the duke of Queensberry; their intercourse was made the subject of a *bon mot* by the prince of Wales. A sufficient knowledge of the French language, was not among the attainments of the duke of Queensberry, who yet valued himself on this as on every other accomplishment. He happened to speak before the prince of his being on particularly good terms with the duke of Orleans. — "I understood that, on the contrary, you never agree," said the prince. — "Your royal highness," replied the duke, "is misinformed: we have never had the slightest difference." — "That is strange," rejoined the prince, "for they say you never speak to him without giving him bad language."

The prince of Wales now returned to his favourite and most expensive pleasure — the turf

He formed a training school at Newmarket of thirty horses, purchased at enormous prices. Fortune, however, favoured him, and his winnings at Newmarket, Epsom, and Ascot, were supposed to cover the expenses of his stud. The improvements at Carlton House were resumed once more, and the curious range of columns which curtained the building on the side of Pall Mall being completed, gave rise to the well-known pleasantry of lord North, on the respective residences of the prince and the duke of York, which were constructed in the same fantastic taste, with a curious diversity of the absurd. Lord North, whose sight now began to fail him, said, that from all he had heard, for he, fortunately in this instance, could not see, the prince of Wales had got into the *pillory*, and the duke of York into the *round-house*.

One, and only one great question was agitated during this session (1787–8) in parliament,—the impeachment of Warren Hastings. His trial was opened on the 15th of February. The members of both houses went in procession from their respective places of meeting to Westminster Hall, the scene of this magnificent drama. The prince of Wales, without taking any part for or against the accused, attended frequently during the proceedings. He was present at that surpassing display of eloquence in which Sheridan took a momentary flight beyond all rivalry, and, during the transient indisposition of the orator on the third day of his triumph, appeared the most kind and anxious of his friends.

The king prorogued parliament on the 11th of July, 1788, under circumstances gratifying to him in

every view, personal and political. War raged in Europe, but at a distance, between the Turks and Russians; England, secure in particular alliances and general amity, enjoyed repose, wholly undisturbed at home by party or distress. The state of the country and of the government was such as to leave politicians and the king, in the absence of all public or political objects, to follow listlessly their inclinations or pleasures. The king, by the advice of his physicians, went, for summer recreation and his health, which was slightly impaired, to Cheltenham. The prince of Wales went to pass the summer, as usual, at Brighton. Mr. Pitt enjoyed his vacation within a short distance of London. Mr. Fox set out on a summer tour through France, Switzerland, and Italy, relaxing from the contention and fatigue of politics, and abandoning himself to his love of nature, literature, and antiquity. He visited Gibbon on his way to Italy at Lausanne, and the tory philosopher has recorded the visit of the whig patriot. "He gave me," says Gibbon in his memoirs, "two days of free and private society.... He seemed to feel and envy my situation; whilst I admired the powers of a superior man, as they are blended in his attractive character with the softness and simplicity of a child. Perhaps no human being was ever more perfectly exempt from the taint of malice, vanity, or falsehood."— What a desideratum in the history of mind, these two days of free communication between two such superior and different intelligences! the active political patriot, who laboured in and for his generation, — and the retired sage, who, with his epicurean indifference, thought

only of his present quiet and future fame. The social communion around Cicero and Plato did not exceed, perhaps did not equal in interest, that of these two days at Lausanne. Mr. Fox received at Bologna an express recalling him to England with the utmost haste. A melancholy event now agitated the nation, parties, and the government.

The king's visit to Cheltenham seemed to have a good effect on his health, and especially on his spirits; he rose, as usual, early, and partook in the excitement caused by his presence with a peculiarity of conduct and manner, which, instead of being thought singular, was applauded as royal simplicity and condescension. On his return to Kew, his health became worse. After a short time it was rumoured, mysteriously, that his disease was of the mind. His not holding the usual drawing-rooms at St. James's confirmed the suspicions of his suffering infirmity of some sort: a drawing-room, however, was held by him at St. James's, on the 24th of October, for the purpose of quieting alarm; but his demeanour only proved, beyond all doubt, to some who conversed with him, that he was suffering mental alienation. Mr. Pitt attended him in the closet after the court broke up, and found his infirmity still more decisively pronounced. It has been said of the minister, that he was mu[illegible] but he concealed, not only his emoti[illegible] state of mind of the person invested wi[illegible] cutive power of the realm. The kin[illegible] standing the levee, and the closet scene with Mr. Pitt, left London for Windsor next day, as if he were perfectly well. This strange want of alarm in those

about him may be accounted for by the previous observation of some habitual but transient, eccentricities. Something like lurking infirmity may, indeed, be traced in the review of his transactions, for many years, with parliament, his ministers, and his eldest son; in his jealousy of his power and prerogatives; his distrust and deception of those with whom he had intercourse, and his peculiar traits of dissimulation and finesse. It is supposed that this was the third manifestation of the same infirmity since his illness in 1765. Sir George Baker, who attended him at Kew, after his return from Cheltenham, cannot well be supposed ignorant of the nature of his malady; but, whatever his professional skill, he was a person without force of character, governed wholly by the queen, — and he almost lost his own wits when the king's illness became violent and alarming. "Warren is the living principle in this business; for poor Baker is half crazed," says admiral Payne, in a letter to Sheridan *, from Windsor, where he attended the prince as an officer of his household. Admiral Payne says, in a second letter to Sheridan †, "I find that the present distemper has been very palpable for some time past. The queen, who sent for Dr. Warren, privately communicated to him her knowledge of the king's situation for some time." The queen, possibly, in her horror of seeing the prince of Wales regent, and in the hands of the whigs, clung to the hope that this access, like others, might pass away without notice, — until the

* Moore's Life of Sheridan. † Ibid.

king's desperate situation rendered concealment no longer possible. The sufferer himself was sensible of the approach of his melancholy visitation; after riding for five hours in a state of violent excitement, he burst into tears on meeting the duke of York, and said, "he hoped he should die, for he was going to be mad." For several days after the 5th of November, he was suffering the double violence of frenzy and bilious fever, to such a degree as to leave but slight hopes not only of his reason but his life. The strength of his physical constitution preserved the latter.

Parliament stood prorogued to the 20th of November, and could not, in the existing state of the executive power, be convoked sooner. In the mean time the prince of Wales and duke of York resided chiefly at Windsor; and the prince, in concert — if it may be so called — with Mr. Pitt, the chancellor (Lord Thurlow), the two secretaries of state, and the queen, attended to the king's private and domestic business.

Windsor Castle, at this moment, was the scene of a most active and complex struggle of intrigue. The case was unprecedented, and the state of parties not common. The prince of Wales, who had the first right and the greatest interest, was the least active. Mr. Fox had not yet had time to return from abroad; and the prince was wholly in the hands of Sheridan and lord Loughborough, who compromised his interests by the policy of dissembled moderation. The prince of Wales hated Mr. Pitt with hereditary cordiality, and a frankness which was his own. Lord Thurlow, either because

his domineering temper * clashed with the same disposition in Mr. Pitt, or, because he anticipated a change of counsels, made his court to the heir apparent, whilst Mr. Pitt associated himself with the queen.

Hitherto queen Charlotte was little spoken of as interfering in politics. She had no political capacity, and, with commendable prudence, restricted her desires to private wealth, diamonds, court etiquette, some church preferments and pensions to her flatterers in England, and places of emolument to her family in the electorate of Hanover. The fear of being reduced to her natural level, the strong temptation of opportunity, and her confidence in the support of Mr. Pitt, stimulated her into a struggle for political power with her son. The game of simulated moderation played by Sheridan and lord Loughborough for the prince, with the chancellor's cautious fear of committing himself too far for retreat, allowed Mr. Pitt time, of which he availed himself, to consolidate his forces and his plans before the meeting of parliament and the return of Mr. Fox.

The two houses of parliament assembled, without the usual summons, on the 20th of November; but the peers and commons remained in their respective chambers, in the absence of the usual authority for opening the session. The chancellor formally communicated in the upper, Mr. Pitt in the lower

* Lavater, on being shown a picture of lord Thurlow, examined it for a moment, and said, "Whether this man be on earth or in hell, I know not, — but wherever he is, he is a tyrant, and will rule if he can."

house, the state of the king; and they respectively moved an adjournment to the 4th of December. The opposition was without a plan, and, above all, without a leader, and the adjournment passed in silence. A general meeting of the privy council, comprising fifty-four in number, of whom twenty-four were of opposition, met at Whitehall on the 3d of December, examined the attending physicians, and agreed upon a report on the evidence, setting forth the king's incapacity, the uncertainty of its duration, and the hopes of his recovery. This report was presented to both houses on their re-assembling next day. Mr. Fox had arrived in the mean time, travelling with extraordinary speed. Lord Camden, in the house of lords, and Mr. Pitt in the house of commons, moved that the report of the privy council should be taken into consideration on the following Monday (December 8th), with a view to supply the defect in the legislature from the incapacity of the king. Mr. Fox appears to have been led into the system of forbearance and delay, in which he found the prince engaged on his arrival, and joined in the suggestion of a member (Mr. Viner), that the house, in such grave circumstances, should not act on the report of the privy council, but examine the physicians at the bar of the house, or by a committee. Mr. Pitt dissented rather faintly. The houses met again on the 6th of December; and Mr. Pitt, who saw the error of his adversaries, and his own advantage in delay, affected to have been convinced by the suggestions of Mr. Viner, and moved the appointment of a committee to examine the physicians. The king

was now removed from Windsor to Kew, and the celebrated Dr. Willis called in. A curious fact, in reference to his removal, is stated by the bishop of Winchester. The physicians, finding it impossible to obtain the king's consent to be removed, resorted to the artifice of presenting to him a pretended note from Mr. Pitt, recommending the change of place; and he consented. The dominion of the minister over the king's mind was assuredly not that of affection, but of habitual fear, and may be regarded as some evidence of habitual latent infirmity.

The report of the evidence of the physicians was brought up on the 10th, and Mr. Pitt, to gain further time, moved the appointment of a committee "to search for precedents of proceedings in cases where the personal exercise of the royal authority had been interrupted or prevented by infancy, sickness, infirmity, or otherwise." Mr. Fox, who probably saw his error, and discarded a system of manœuvring which was not his, now came directly to the main question. He said "the appointment of such a committee, in search of precedents, which the mover well knew did not exist, would be idle loss of time. *There was*," he said, "*an heir apparent of full age and capacity to exercise the royal power, which exercise was his clear right, during the king's incapacity.*" Mr. Pitt assumed great warmth of tone, and pretended to be astonished at a proposition, which had already been launched before the public by means of the press, and which he well knew would be put forward in parliament. He asserted, and pledged himself to prove, on a future occasion, that such a claim of right for the prince

of Wales or any other person, was little short of *treason to the constitution; that the prince of Wales, under such circumstances, had no more right to exercise the royal authority, than any other person in these realms;* and that it belonged only to the two houses to supply the temporary deficiency of the executive power." Mr. Burke, blending violence and sarcasm with his accustomed energy, said, "that since it was proposed to make him an elector for the regency, he should give his vote for the prince of Wales, in preference to a *competitor, the prince opposite* (Mr. Pitt), who threatened the supporters of the prince of Wales's rights with the penalties of constructive treason." Loud cries of "order" interrupted this characteristic sally. The motion for a committee of precedents was carried without a division.

Lord Camden made a similar motion next day in the house of lords; and not only argued, but inveighed vehemently, against the proposition laid down by Mr. Fox, which was, at the same time, ably defended by lord Loughborough. Mr. Fox took occasion, at the next meeting of the house of commons, to complain of misrepresentation of his speech by lord Camden. Having premised that he spoke only as an individual member, without authority from the prince of Wales, he said, his proposition was not that imputed to him by lord Camden, "that the heir apparent had a right to *assume* the executive power;" but, "that the right was in the prince subject to the adjudication to him of its possession and exercise by the two houses. The word 'assume,'" he said, "was not, he confidently believed

used by him, or, if used, only in the carelessness of debate — not in the sense imputed." Mr. Pitt met the explanation with great frankness: he denied the prince of Wales any right whatever, and declared that upon this point he was at issue with Mr. Fox. Such was the question upon which these two celebrated rivals for power and the palm of eloquence were supposed to have changed places; the whig asserter of democratic principles becoming the champion of the crown, and the minister of the crown urging the abstract rights of the people. It would be as rash as useless to judge the constitutional question; but it may be said, without partiality, and without presumption, that the real merits had the least influence, and that ambition was the motive spring, on both sides. The two great leaders may be said to have been actuated as puppets, by the situations in which they found themselves. They received their inspirations extrinsically, from their respective positions, as the Delphic priestess from her tripod, and not from within. Mr. Fox was actuated by his personal attachment to the prince of Wales, and the desire of serving his country, his party, and his fame. Mr. Pitt had no hope of continuing minister under the regency of the prince of Wales; and he had two motives for establishing his principle — to secure the favour of the incapacitated monarch, if he should recover — and, if he should not recover, to prepare the way for such restrictions of the power and patronage of the regent as would render it almost impossible for Mr. Fox, as his minister, to carry on the administration. It has been said of

Mr. Pitt, that when he heard Mr. Fox assert the prince's *right*, he exclaimed to one of his friends near him on the treasury bench, "I'll *un-whig* that gentleman for the rest of his life." It seems to have been the chief aim of his speeches to *out*-whig his rival, which, by a very extraordinary concurrence of circumstances, happened to be the proper game of a tory minister. "When the executive powers were suspended, to whom," he asked, "but to the people, represented in both houses of parliament, belonged the right of providing a remedy? The assertion of the inherent right of the prince of Wales was one of those exploded ideas of indefeasible right which had fallen into contempt." Mr. Fox urged, "that it was an occasion for recurring, not to the primary axioms of government and abstract rights of the people, but to the analogies of the constitution and the common law; that it was a case for the judicial, not the elective, conscience of the house; that the throne was not vacant, or the succession to be changed; that the powers of the crown were a trust, not for the monarch, but for the people, and therefore not to be partitioned or curtailed according to the personal situation of the individual king." The question was argued in a committee of the whole house (of commons) on the 16th of December. Never, perhaps, were the proceedings of a deliberative assembly more earnest and eloquent. It was not one of those mock trials of rhetorical prowess, in which the disputants play with both the foil and the mask. All were animated with the greatness of the question, and the reality of the strife; and the house was so full that

members stood on the floor between the table and the bar. It were vain to look for the eloquence of this and other great debates in the meagre and deformed remains of the Annual Register and Parliamentary History. Like the eloquence of some of the earlier orators of Rome, it survives only in tradition. *Oratorum ipsa vis ignota est— nota gloria.* Mr. Rushton, a young member, speaking from the crowd on the floor, made one of those happy strokes which electrify and enlighten for a moment a popular assembly even the most biassed against conviction. " Suppose," said he, " that in the glorious reign of George II., in the year 1745, that good king had lain under a similar affliction, where was the minister, where the man, who would have dared to say, in the face of that house and of the country, that the prince of Wales had no more right to the regency than any other subject in the realm? The man or the minister who had been so daring, must have sought shelter in some other place than the house of commons, and in some other country than England." Tumultuous cheers from the one party, and the still more decisive testimony of murmurs from the other, interrupted and almost drowned these few stirring words. Their eloquence was in their resistless truth. But principles are rarely acted upon or judged intrinsically; their value is made to depend on attendant circumstances of self-interest, feeling, or situation. Mr. Pitt's proposition was carried in both houses, in spite of an attempt to leave the question of right undecided. The duke of York, in his place as a peer, disclaimed, on the part of the prince,

any assertion of right, and deprecated its being brought into discussion; but lord Camden, no longer in the vigour of his years, understanding, or independence, and now the chief auxiliary of Mr. Pitt, pressed it to a decision.* That decision remains a monument of the facility with which a minister may, under particular circumstances, make a revolution. — From an elective regent to a change of dynasty is an easy step. The two houses, under the direction of Mr. Pitt, disposed of the regency in the same manner in which the convention had disposed of the crown to the prince of Orange, in 1688. They even assumed not only the disposal but the exercise of the executive power, in a manner still more flagrant. It was necessary for Mr. Pitt's purposes to make "an act of parliament." But to this the co-operating assent of the royal will is, or was till then, essential. In this predicament they voted, that though the king's *natural* capacity was suspended, his *political* capacity was alive and active, in a piece of wax contained in an embroidered velvet bag, and called the great seal.

There is nothing in all this to shock the advocates of the sovereignty of the people; but much to alarm the champions of the king's hereditary sovereignty, as a power co-ordinate and co-equal with the two

* The extent of lord Camden's subserviency to Mr. Pitt at this period, may be judged from a fact stated by Dr. Watson: — "At a meeting of the bishops in 1788, Shipley and I were for the repeal of the test and corporation acts. On my afterwards urging lord Camden, he said, he saw no danger in the repeal, and Pitt was wrong in not having repealed them before; *but he must be supported now.*" — Watson's *Memoirs.*

houses of parliament. The principle avowed and acted upon stands a convenient precedent for a usurper, a faction, or the people, in a disposition to change the succession or the government. Yet the tories were they who bore Mr. Pitt in triumph over the pretensions of the heir apparent. Some thought themselves guarding the rights of an afflicted sovereign during his temporary bereavement, — as if the executive power were his personal property, and not a magistracy with which he was invested. They sacrificed the monarchy to the monarch. Others acted in a spirit of the keenest self-interest, with the same professions of loyal zeal. Lord Thurlow pleaded the additional bond of gratitude, and signalised himself by a profane sally of hypocrisy and imprecation. "His debt of gratitude to his majesty," he said, "was great, for many favours graciously conferred; and when he forgot his king, then might his God forget him!" It was known at the time, and it is notorious now, that this man had but a few hours before been negotiating his desertion of "his king" and "his God," on the terms of continuing chancellor under the regent. But his gratitude and conscience were touched of a sudden, by an intimation from Dr. Willis that the king was likely to recover. Lord Thurlow was a remarkable instance, in his way, of that species of impostors called "men of the world." His grossness of speech passed for frankness and singularity; his ruggedness for honesty; whilst the whole was but one of the many envelopes which cover unprincipled versatility.

The decision of the house of commons was naturally to be expected. Returned on the general

election which followed the dismissal of the coalition ministry, and proved so fatal to the coalition party, its animating principle was hostility to Mr. Fox, and sympathy with Mr. Pitt. As to the decision of the house of lords, whilst that portion of the legislature contains so many actual and expectant placemen, lords of the bedchamber and bishops, the minister who fails to command a majority in it may regard his failure as a notice that his presence is no longer desired in the royal closet. But it must be admitted that there was a proportionate majority of the nation in favour of Mr. Pitt. The coalition was still in bad odour with the great mass of the people, and the conduct of the prince of Wales had caused dissatisfaction and alarm. His dissipation and debts, his political connection, and above all the belief of his being secretly married to a Roman catholic, arrayed against him simple good faith, religious bigotry, and that less numerous but more active class of persons, who affect to be shocked or alarmed only to promote their private views.

The prince was attacked by the hirelings and partisans of the minister and the court, not alone with the utmost latitude of free speech and publication, but with calumny and ribaldry. He was represented, in print and in caricatures, as a ruined spendthrift and unnatural son, usurping the crown, and eager for the death, of the king his father. A clergyman named Withers, one of those persons who degrade literature — at least authorship — by converting it into a trade of slanderous personality, assailed the prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert in newspapers and pamphlets, with a furious show

of religious and moral zeal, but with so much folly that the wonder now is how his publications could have received the least credit or attention. He was tried for his libels on Mrs. Fitzherbert, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment in Newgate, where the wretched man died before the expiration of the sentence. Mr. Horne Tooke, a different sort of person, proceeded in a different way, and with effect. He had a truly radical hatred of the whigs, and saw he could not more effectually embarrass them than by confirming the belief of the prince's marriage. With this view, in a pamphlet entitled by him "A Letter to a Friend," he not only asserted his belief, but his knowledge, of the performance of the ceremony. Instead of expressing, however, any disapprobation or alarm, he professed to look upon the marriage as perfectly safe and proper, and alluded to the lady, not only in terms of polite gallantry, but formal respect, describing her as "a most amiable and justly valued female character, whom he concluded to be in all respects legally, really, worthily, and happily for this country, HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF WALES." "It would," he adds, "be a most ridiculous affectation to hesitate to declare in so many words that it is reported, and by me on solid grounds believed, that his royal highness is married to the late Mrs. Fitzherbert, now his lawful wife." Mr. Horne Tooke has not disclosed — to the public at least — the facts within his knowledge relative to the marriage. It is more extraordinary that a man of his acuteness and information did not state the grounds upon which he believed the marriage *lawful*, in the

teeth of the royal marriage act. Persons of some authority have indeed declared that act invalid, as being contrary to the law of God. The divine law is doubtless paramount; but there would be danger in admitting its jurisdiction as superior and intangible in practical jurisprudence, whilst it continues to be interpreted by men.

The personal conduct of Mr. Pitt was not merely haughty, but insulting to the prince of Wales. Mr. Grey charged him, in the house of commons, with a systematic want of respect and courtesy to the prince, in the whole course of the proceedings. The prince himself was so indignant, especially at Mr. Pitt's disclosing his intentions in the house of commons, before he made any communication of them to him, that he addressed a letter of remonstrance to the chancellor. Mr. Pitt's letter to the prince, in reply, carries, under the forms of respectful vindication, a haughtiness bordering on sarcastic retort. "Your royal highness will permit me," says he, "to recall to your recollection, that I more than once had an opportunity humbly to express my readiness at all times to attend your royal highness, and have several times at Windsor had the honour to enquire whether your royal highness had any orders for me, and have received for answer that you had not." * This letter was so little satisfactory to the prince, that he made no reply to it.

Mr. Pitt communicated to the prince of Wales, by a letter dated 30th December (1788), his plan of a restricted regency, as agreed upon in the cabinet, for the prince's acceptance or rejection. Its

* For the letter, see Tomline's Life of Pitt.

chief points were, that the prince of Wales, as regent, should exercise the royal authority in the name and on behalf of the king, during the king's illness, and no longer; but with these provisions, that the care of the king's person, and the management of the king's household, with the appointment and direction of all the officers and servants belonging to it, should be vested in the queen; that the prince should have no power (beyond the granting of leases) over the king's property real or personal; or of granting any office, place, or pension, otherwise than during the king's pleasure; or of granting any rank or dignity of the peerage to any one except the king's issue having attained the age of twenty-one years. The prince addressed to the minister in reply a celebrated letter, which was long supposed to be the joint production of Sheridan, lord Minto, lord Loughborough, and other members of the opposition, but which is now known to be the composition of Burke. It is an admirable model of elegant and characteristic style, and another proof of that versatility which Burke proved early in his career by his essay, in imitation of lord Bolingbroke.* The letter lay some time on the duke of Portland's table, for the inspection and suggestions of the leading Whigs, all of whom read, approved, and admired, except Sheridan, who, from jealousy of private influence, or literary taste, or some other of the many motives which spring unhappily from human nature, made a few and slight alterations, which were not improvements. The prince in this letter accepted the regency on the

* Who but the man thus versatile, eloquent, and able can have invented the style of Junius?

terms proposed to him. It may be proper to extract the following passage, as an exposition of the principles on which he was advised to undertake the executive government, with powers so substantially and invidiously limited.—"The prince has discharged an indispensable duty, in giving his free opinion on the plan thus submitted to his consideration. His conviction of the evils which may arise to the king's interests, to the peace and happiness of the royal family, and to the safety and welfare of the nation, from the government of the country remaining longer in its present maimed and debilitated state, outweighs, in the prince's mind, every other consideration, and will determine him to undertake the painful trust imposed on him by the present melancholy necessity (which of all the king's subjects he deplores the most), in full confidence that the affection and loyalty to the king, the experienced attachment to the house of Brunswick, and the generosity which has always distinguished the nation, will carry him through the many difficulties inseparable from this most difficult situation, with comfort to himself, with honour to the king, and with advantage to the public." Mr. Pitt in the name of the ministers made a very curious rejoinder. It begins with treating as a state paper, in which the prince had personally no share, a letter professing to be his. "The king's servants have received *the paper* which your royal highness was pleased to communicate to them, through the lord chancellor." Mr. Pitt then proceeds, "They (the king's servants) beg leave respectfully to assure your royal highness, that if

the plan which they took the liberty of submitting to your royal highness had appeared to them in the light in which they have the mortification to observe that it is considered by your royal highness, it would never have occurred to them to propose it." This pretended ignorance of the prince's views, which his majesty's ministers knew well, may be called sneering dissimulation.

Mr. Pitt had given notice that he should introduce his bill of restrictions on the 6th of January (1789). The order of the day was moved by him, but interrupted by Mr. Loveden, who proposed a fresh examination of the physicians, for the purpose of ascertaining the existing state of the king. This proposition was supported by Mr. Fox and his friends with much zeal, and some strong insinuations. The fact was, that the medical reports of the king's progressive improvement were suspected of being groundless, and made only with the view of influencing votes. The queen was directly charged with either falsifying the bulletins, or influencing the physicians so far as to have them changed. Mr. Pitt consented to the delay, and acknowledged that the queen, considering, in one instance, the king's state more favourable than it appeared by the medical bulletin, did procure an alteration to that effect, "for the greater satisfaction and better information of his majesty's loving subjects." Mr. Sheridan moved as an amendment, that the committee to be appointed should have "the power to examine persons and papers." His object was to have, not only the physicians, but the king's attendants, examined; and to obtain certain letters

respecting the king's alleged improvement, said to have been written for the purpose of influencing members of parliament. The amendment was rejected, and the examination confined to the physicians. This new interrogation lasted five days, and was conducted with as much party spirit as the debates in either house. Dr. Warren, who was less sanguine in his hopes, was treated as the tool of the prince and the whigs; and Dr. Willis, who was more sanguine, as the tool of Mr. Pitt, the queen, and the tories. Dr. Willis's situation demanded extraordinary confidence in himself. He had undertaken the responsibility of discarding the system of the other physicians, and introducing one wholly his own. He stood single in the medical council. All the other physicians, as well as Dr. Warren, discouraged his hopes; but he had the nerve to persevere, and was rewarded with success. The report of the evidence having been printed, Mr. Pitt introduced his restrictions, on the 16th of January, in the shape of five resolutions, which were severally discussed, adjourned, agreed to in both houses, and presented by committees to the queen and prince of Wales.

Hitherto the two houses acted in the anomalous state of two separate conventions. Parliament was formally opened on the 3d of February by means of the king's political capacity, pronounced mysteriously inherent and indestructible in the material and inanimate elements of the great seal!

A bill embodying the restrictions was brought in by Mr. Pitt on the 5th of February. It consisted of thirty-two clauses, which were separately dis-

cussed. To follow the discussions, would be to extract the parliamentary debates.

Upon the seventh clause, providing against the regent's marrying a papist, Mr. Rolle appeared once more on behalf of the constitution in church and state. "He wished," he said, "that somebody would come forward and confirm the declaration made by Mr. Fox, in that house, two years before, in order, by such confirmation, to remove doubts and scruples out of doors. He knew that he was and should be a marked man in a certain quarter, but he would still move an amendment, to add in the clause of exclusion and disqualification for marrying a papist, the words 'or who is or shall be married to a papist in fact or in law.'" Mr. Fox had gone to Bath a few days before, according to some, for the restoration of his health; but, according to others, in consequence of discord in the counsels of Carlton House. Mr. Sheridan, in his absence, replied to Mr. Rolle, — "I tell him," said Mr. Sheridan, "I doubt his motives. What, but the wish to give suspicion wing, and disseminate alarm, could induce him to propose an amendment, upon which he dares not divide the house." Mr. Courtney followed, on the same side, in a happy strain of irony and humour. "The pure motives and ardent zeal of the honourable member (Mr. Rolle) for the constitution in church and state, were," he said, "proved beyond all doubt by the weakness and absurdity of his arguments. Disdaining the aid of logic or reason, he trusted to his conscience alone, and exposed himself in the artless, naked simplicity of his understanding." The amend-

ment was negatived without a division, — but the naked understanding and useful clownishness of the partisan who moved it were afterwards shrouded in a peerage.

The regency bill passed through the house of commons, after a tedious discussion of its provisions in detail. It seems to have been framed throughout upon the supposition that the sons were the natural enemies of their father. The prince of Wales was deprived of the care of the king's person *in limine;* and, on the same principle, the duke of York was, by an express vote, excluded from the queen's council. The bill, on its passage through the house of lords, where it met little opposition, was near its completion, when the lord chancellor unexpectedly announced to the house, on the 18th of February, " the propriety of suspending all further proceedings, as the king was nearly convalescent." The king's improvement had been for some time rather understated; and the chancellor's communication, which had been agreed on in the cabinet the day before, was kept a profound secret, — as if for a theatric stroke of disappointment to one party and joy to the other.

This turn of events was probably fortunate for the prince of Wales, — at least for his intended ministry. It was scarcely possible that Mr. Fox could carry on the government consistently with his views and character, whilst the queen, the household, and the sense of the nation were marshalled against him. Wielding the energies and influence of the executive, in support of a generous policy, which he would have pursued, he might beat down Mr. Pitt,

and restore the suspended but natural relation between himself and the people. With restricted and insufficient resources, he would probably wreck his party and compromise his reputation.

It is a matter of some surprise that the prince was not advised to claim the regency unrestricted, and, when offered with restrictions, to decline it altogether. The motives assigned in his letter must be regarded as diplomatic rather than real. His rejection would have greatly embarrassed Mr. Pitt (supposing that a regency had proved necessary), and gained him moral advantages of situation, ultimately of more value than the possession of a crippled and precarious power. Such probably would have been the course pursued, had Mr. Fox been in England. It may be inferred from his speeches, and from the principles asserted in his historic fragment, that he would have advised the prince to lay his claim directly before the two houses, and, if offered with restrictions, to decline the exercise of the executive power. But Mr. Fox on his arrival found the prince already committed with other advisers, and experienced frequent disgust in the cabinet (if it may be so called) of Carlton House. The prince's council, composed of the dukes of Cumberland, York, and Portland; lords Fitzwilliam, Spencer, North, Stormont, Sandwich, Loughborough, and Southampton; sir T. Dundas, Messrs. Burke, Fox, Grey, and Sheridan, was not formed for concord. The two first, with their incapacity and rank, were mere pageants; but the toryism of lords North, Stormont, and Sandwich, the dubious and aspiring politics of lord Loughborough, the hankering at-

tachment of lord Southampton to the court, the impetuosity of Burke, the finesse and favouritism of Sheridan, could not fail to produce collisions.

The prince's refusal, on the supposition of a regency, would have caused an anomalous state of the executive government. Whilst the queen with a council governed Great Britain, the prince of Wales would have been unrestricted regent of Ireland by declared right of birth. The parliament of Ireland had been but a passive instrument for registering English acts until 1782. By a very unusual concurrence of events, the Irish people at that moment possessed three resources of national revolution, of which the union is resistless, — the sentiment of liberty, the faculty of eloquence, and the power of the sword; — and the Irish parliament unmanacled itself. Never was transition more rapid from the state of infancy in 1782, to that of generous and vigorous youth in 1789, and it may be added, to premature decay and extreme corruption at the union in 1800. The two houses of parliament in Ireland voted, in 1789, an address to the prince of Wales, entreating his assumption of the executive power of the realm of Ireland during the king's incapacity; passed a vote of censure upon the lord lieutenant, the marquess of Buckingham (late lord Temple) on his refusal to transmit their address, and sent over, charged with it, a deputation composed of the duke of Leinster and lord Charlemont on the part of the lords, and Messrs. Conolly, O'Neil, Ponsonby, and Stewart, on the part of the commons of Ireland. The deputation was attended in London by a numerous train of lords and commons of England,

connected with Ireland by property or birth. The address was presented to the prince at Carlton House, on the 26th of February. By this time the king was in a state of convalescence; but the deputation was not the less graciously received. The prince's answer, written probably by Sheridan, has in it something of sentiment and effusion which would make the reader forget that it was a state paper. "If," said he, "in conveying my grateful sentiments on their (the lords and commons of Ireland) conduct in relation to the king my father, and to the inseparable interest of the two kingdoms, I find it impossible to express adequately my feelings on what relates to myself, I trust you will not be the less disposed to believe that I have an understanding to comprehend the value of what they have done, a heart that must remember, and principles that will not suffer me to abuse their confidence." He concluded with delaying for a few days his final answer, in consequence of the favourable change in the state of the king's health. The deputation was splendidly entertained at Carlton House in the mean time. The leading men of the prince's party were invited to meet them at a grand state dinner. On this occasion the dining room was emblazoned with splendid devices, ingeniously complimentary. The arms of Ireland, encircled with a glory, stood in the centre of the banquet, and harps, trefoils, and Irish Terpsichores, figured in all the mazes of festive allegory. It was at this dinner that Burke made his well known classic pun, it may be feared too well known to be repeated; the prince insisted, peremptorily, on one bottle more at parting, and at a

late hour, upon which his Irish guests manifested some coyness, until Burke reminded them that the prince, on this occasion, was absolute *jure de vino* (*divino*).

The king's recovery having been pronounced, the prince of Wales took leave of the deputation finally on the 12th of March. His second address is distinguished by the same felicity and cordiality of expression as the first. "My lords and gentlemen," said he, "though full of joy for the event which enables me to take leave of you in this manner personally, I cannot but regret your departure. I have had an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of your private characters, and it has added to the high esteem which I before entertained for you on account of your public merit."

The difference between the courses pursued by the parliaments of both countries may be accounted for, with respect to Ireland, by the more indulgent temper of the nation to the prince's irregularities; by their supposition, well or ill founded, that the prince felt towards them something of a national partiality; by their setting a lower and juster value on the private virtues of George III.; and by a certain instinct or impulse which makes the Irish, when they come in contact with royalty, too profuse of their homage, and too prompt and sanguine in their hopes. The abolition of the Irish parliament was cherished in the breast of Mr. Pitt from this hour, as a measure of policy and revenge.

The bulletin of the 17th of February pronounced the king convalescent, and on the 23d he wrote a letter with his own hand to Mr. Pitt, desiring to see

him next morning at Kew. On the 24th the chancellor stated in the house of lords, that he had an interview of an hour with the king, and had found "the posture of his majesty's mind clear and distinct." Mr. Pitt made a similar statement to the house of commons. These communications were respectively followed by adjournments until the 27th of February, when the bulletin pronounced his majesty free from complaint, and added, that "by his majesty's command the physicians' report was to be discontinued from that day." By what mysterious process the king's political capacity returned, for the purposes of this command, from the great seal, to incorporate itself once more with his natural capacity and his person, it were vain to enquire. The falsehood of a proposition is demonstratively established by absurdity in its logical consequences, and the ridiculous juggle of the great seal would alone prove the constitutional obliquity of the theorem laid down and acted upon by Mr. Pitt. The two houses of parliament took it implicitly for granted on the faith of the bulletin, of the chancellor, and of Mr. Pitt, that this incomprehensible re-migration of the political capacity had taken place, and the king resumed the exercise of the executive power. "A formal enquiry," says the bishop of Winchester, "into the fact of his majesty's restoration to health, which was universally acknowledged, would have been highly indelicate and improper, and no one could now question the king's right immediately to enter upon the government of his realms, in the same manner as if there had been no suspension of the royal

authority." It would be difficult to cite an example of more questions begged, and difficulties slurred over, than are here crowded into a single sentence by the courtly bishop.

The session of parliament was re-opened on the 10th of March, by royal commission, the king not being deemed yet in a state to perform the ceremony in person. It would appear, from this re-opening, that the minister doubted the validity of the form of opening by virtue of the great seal —like the quack doctor, who professed to cure by sorcery, but descended at the same time to the vulgar aid of the pharmacopœia. Thursday, the 23d of April, was appointed as a day of general thanksgiving for the king's recovery, and on that day he went in state to St. Paul's, attended by the queen, princes, and princesses; the members of both houses of parliament; the great officers of the household and of state; the foreign ambassadors, and an immense concourse of people. The king was received by the bishop of London and the dean of St. Paul's (afterwards bishop of Winchester). "A martial band," says the bishop of Winchester, "stationed near the door, played appropriate music till his majesty reached the area under the great dome, when it ceased; and instantly the organ, accompanied by the voices of above five thousand children of the city charity schools, who were placed upon circular seats, gradually rising between the pillars on both sides, began the 100th psalm. The simple melody, joined to the spectacle, evidently affected the king, and as he was walking between the bishop of London and myself, he turned to me, and said

with great emotion, '*I now feel that I have been ill;*' he then stopped, but recovering himself, proceeded to the choir." This expression of the king may suggest a question, how far the mind from which it proceeded was adequate to bear the weight of empire, with its awful responsibilities. The king, however, was no doubt in a state of mental competency to assume the powers and responsibilities of the executive branch of the legislature, or the wisdom of the nation in both houses would not have sanctioned and submitted to it; — but this only proves, that a state of mind, which would not be trusted with any of the great offices of the realm, administrative or judicial, may be an adequate depository for the powers of the crown.

CHAP. VIII.

1789—1792-3.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.—SECESSION OF THE PRINCE OF WALES FROM THE WHIGS.—SCHISM IN THE WHIG PARTY.

THE queen's competition with her son for political power, degenerated into the rancour of personal rivalry. Scurrilous attacks upon his character, and, through his relations with Mrs. Fitzherbert, upon his feelings, coupled with fulsome flatteries of the queen, in the ministerial newspapers, were diligently provided for her private reading at Kew. It would seem that they gratified her, not only because they weakened a competitor, but because they wounded an enemy. The duke of York, who took a zealous part with his brother, was included in her resentment. She had assumed the absolute direction of the household on the king's removal to Kew, and she indulged her feelings towards the two princes, by refusing their applications, whilst others were admitted, to see the king in the earlier stages of his recovery. The pretence of this exclusion was to avoid agitating the sufferer, and (passing over the motives) the effect was to place the two princes in the light of unnatural children, whose curiosity was impatient only for changes for the worse. Several

letters, professing to be addressed by the prince of Wales and the duke of York, to the queen, in reference to the general question of the regency, their particular conduct, and their requests to be admitted into the presence of their father, have appeared in print; of these, some are of certain, and others of very doubtful authenticity. But even the former, composed as they were by others, are curious only as specimens of the rhetoric of state papers, without the slightest illustration of personal feeling or character.

Advantage was taken of the first glimmering of reason in the king to impress him with opinions the most unfavourable to the prince and his supporters, and the most favourable to Mr. Pitt, his party, and the queen. But so carefully had the prince of Wales been debarred from private interviews with his father, or so entirely had the king recovered his dissimulation with his other faculties, that the prince's first direct intimation of his father's displeasure was in a letter from the king to the duke of Clarence, nearly three months after the king's convalescence. The prince, in a diplomatic letter to his father, drawn up by Sheridan, says, "Your majesty's letter to my brother, the duke of Clarence, was the first direct intimation I had ever received that my conduct, and that of my brother, the duke of York, had brought on us the heavy misfortune of your majesty's displeasure." He then proceeds, "I should be wholly unworthy the return of your majesty's confidence and good opinion, which will ever be the first object of my life, if I could have read the passage I refer to in that letter without

the deepest sorrow and regret for the effect produced on your majesty's mind, though, at the same time, I felt the firmest persuasion that your majesty's generosity and goodness would never permit that effect to *remain*, without affording to us an opportunity of knowing what has been urged against us, of replying to our accusers, and of justifying ourselves, if the means of justification were in our power." He next laments "those appearances of a less gracious disposition in the queen," plainly intimating that she was an accuser, and announces "a full statement and account of his conduct, and of the motives and circumstances which influenced him during the period (of the regency) alluded to." * The prince is made, in this letter, with great propriety, to qualify the first intimation of the king's displeasure towards himself and the duke of York, with the word "direct." He had received some indirect but unequivocal intimations: — a single instance will suffice. The prince of Wales and duke of York, after forming part of the procession of thanksgiving to St. Paul's, appeared in uniform at the head of detachments from their regiments to escort the king from St. James's to Buckingham House. On the king's arrival, they requested permission to see their father, and were refused!

This is altogether a melancholy view of royalty: — the father visited with the most distressing of all human afflictions — the mother conspiring with a minister to dispute the spoils of empire with the son — and the father resuscitated to consciousness

* Moore's Life of Sheridan.

and memory, to be inspired by the mother with suspicions of the natural duty and affection of his heir and offspring. Dr. Watson, bishop of Llandaff, who made one of the ablest constitutional speeches on the regency question, in favour of the prince's claim, and was personally conversant with the politics of the time, says of the prince of Wales, "that he bore the queen's ill humour well, and always spoke as a good son."

A remarkable affair which took place at this time gave rise to the imputation that party spirit could prevail over maternal feeling with the queen. The late duke of Richmond, then colonel Lennox, and heir presumptive to the actual duke, thought it necessary to demand a personal explanation of the duke of York. The quarrel originated in an assertion of the duke of York, "that colonel Lennox had submitted, at Daubigny's club, to language which no gentleman ought to have borne." The duke of York was colonel of the Coldstream guards, and colonel Lennox captain in that regiment. Colonel Lennox took occasion, on the parade, to ask the duke of York, "What were the words to which he had submitted, and by whom spoken?" The duke of York merely ordered colonel Lennox to his post; but, after the parade, he sent for colonel Lennox to the orderly room, and, on the colonel's arrival, said, that off duty, he was to be regarded, not as a prince or superior officer, but as a private gentleman in a brown coat. Colonel Lennox wrote a circular to the members of the club, requesting them to declare, within a given time, "whether, to their knowledge, any such words had been addressed to him; the

absence of an answer to be construed as an admission in the negative." No answer was returned; and at the expiration of the time specified, colonel Lennox demanded a retractation or a meeting from the duke of York. The duke refused explanation, and a meeting was appointed at Wimbledon Common, on the 26th of May. The late lord Hastings, then lord Rawdon, was the duke's, and lord Winchelsea, colonel Lennox's friend. The signal being given, colonel Lennox fired, and (according to the authorised statement) his ball "grazed his royal highness's curl." How "the grazing of a curl" could be felt or ascertained, is a question for those who have experience in what are called gunshot wounds. "Lord Rawdon," continues the authorised account, "said, 'he thought enough had been done.' Lieutenant-colonel Lennox observed, that 'his royal highness had not fired.' Lord Rawdon said, 'it was not the duke's intention to fire: his royal highness had come out upon colonel Lennox's desire, and had no animosity against him.' Lieutenant-colonel Lennox 'pressed that the duke of York should fire,' which was declined upon a repetition of the reason. Lord Winchelsea then went up to the duke of York, and expressed his hope that his royal highness would have no objection to say, that 'he considered lieutenant-colonel Lennox a man of honour and courage.' His royal highness replied, that 'he should say nothing;—he had come out to give lieutenant-colonel Lennox satisfaction, and did not mean to fire at him. If lieutenant-colonel Lennox was not satisfied, he might fire again.' Lieutenant-colonel Lennox said

'he could not possibly fire again at the duke, as his royal highness did not mean to fire.' On this both parties left the ground." The statement, from which the foregoing extract has been made, is signed "Rawdon" and "Winchelsea." It is obviously not to the advantage of the duke of York. He first used expressions ruinous to the character of an officer and a gentleman in his regiment; he then waived his privilege of prince and superior officer; gave a meeting; and, after being once fired at by the aggrieved party, refused an apology; but, at the same time, disarmed his adversary by expressly declining to fire. Colonel Lennox demanded a regimental court of enquiry, which pronounced, somewhat ambiguously, "that, subsequent to the 15th of May (the day of the meeting in the orderly room) lieutenant colonel Lennox had behaved with courage; but, from the peculiar difficulty of his situation, not with judgment." The imputation on the late duke of Richmond, of wanting personal firmness, was unjust. If he compromised himself at Daubigny's, it must have been from want of perception. He was one of the common-places of nature; heartless and dull; susceptible of only one species of excitement, in which he freely indulged; but endowed with at least the common share of animal courage.

Soon after the duel, colonel Lennox was among the company at the queen's birth-night ball. The prince of Wales, who opened the ball with the princess royal, passed over colonel Lennox and his partner, and on colonel Lennox's approaching him in his turn, led the princess to a seat. The queen,

observing the prince highly irritated, spoke to him, and remarked that he appeared heated. He expressed, in reply, his indignation at the presence of colonel Lennox, after the affair with the duke of York. The result was, that the queen retired, and the ball broke up with the same abruptness as the banquet in Macbeth.

Several grand galas were given on the same occasion by the nobility and foreign ambassadors. The queen was invited by the ambassadors of France and Spain. It is the etiquette, on such occasions, to send a list of the intended company; and in this instance all those who had supported the prince on the regency question, with the exception of members of the royal family, were excluded. The prince marked his sense of the exclusion by leaving the Spanish ambassador's gala after he had been present only a very few minutes, to return, and meet a party of his friends at Carlton House. The conduct of the prince, and dukes of York and Clarence at the French ambassador's gala was still more marked: they left the drawing-room together, on perceiving colonel Lennox honoured by the queen with a gracious recognition. The brothers would, perhaps, have acted in a more becoming spirit, had they met colonel Lennox without resentment: but the queen should have shrunk from him as one who had attacked the life of her son, — instead of distinguishing him by her courtesies, because he was the nephew and heir of the duke of Richmond, one of her regency partisans. If the prince of Wales was deficient in generosity to colonel Lennox, he fully redeemed his character for

high breeding, by an apology to lady Catherine Barnard, the partner of the colonel; and the lady received the apology with a grace which obtained her the distinction of being toasted at Carlton House.

The king, accompanied by the queen and princesses, left London on the 26th of June for Weymouth. A semi-official journal of the royal tour, was published at the time. It was evidently the labour of some one attached to the suite, and is not wholly unworthy the attention of the curious. The New Forest, according to the author, excited in the king not only wit, but the gift of prophecy. "His majesty, observing a black cloud after he had been admiring the prospects of the New Forest, turned round, and said to colohel Hayward, who attended him, — 'And pray, colonel, what prospect is that? I fancy, if we don't get home soon, we shall know.'" The chronicler remarks upon this, that "a king, for once, possessed the spirit of prophecy, for immediately afterwards it poured a deluge." He then profoundly subjoins — "Montesquieu is right in his supposition of the influence of climate. Fine air and serene skies not only generate health and spirits, but wit, cheerfulness, and humour."

The king made his accustomed visit to Mr. Weld at Lulworth Castle. This distinction, conferred on a catholic gentleman, has been regarded as a signal proof of enlarged toleration; but Mr. Weld atoned for his popery by his hereditary jacobitism, in the eyes of George III. who could not forgive whiggism,

though it had raised his family from the sovereignty of a petty state to that of a great people.

The first act of the prince of Wales, had he entered on the exercise of the regency, would have been to create his brother, prince William, a peer. On the arrival of the latter, in the spring, he found the king restored to his functions; and, after some short delay, was created duke of Clarence. He entered into the society, amusements, and interests of the prince with the same familiarity and zeal as the duke of York; and afforded frequent matter for conversation, by his naval frankness, and his whimsical application of that most figurative of all languages, — the vocabulary of sailors. A curious rencontre was said to have taken place the morning after the French ambassador's gala, between him and the well-known Madame Schwellenberg. Having called at Buckingham House, he was shown into a room in which he found this German favourite of the queen. Upon his entrance the lady retired precipitately; but soon returned to apologise for her rudeness by saying "she thought it was the duke of York." — "And suppose it was the duke of York," said the enraged sailor, saluting her ears with a quarter-deck rebuke, of which the only part that can be cited was the threat of "a stinging dozen before all the pages of the back stairs."

Brighton, as usual, was the prince's residence for a great portion of the summer. Mr. Fox was one of his party at the pavilion, and at Lewes races, where the prince was received by sir Ferdinand Poole, the sheriff of the county, in state; that is, with the whole male population of Lewes as javelin

men, a grotesque and mighty host, in his train. The public admiration on this occasion was divided, on the race-ground, between three ladies, who appeared each in a phaeton drawn by four grey ponies: these were the duchess of Rutland, Mrs. Fitzherbert, and lady Lade. The last named, in spite of being countenanced by the prince, could not obtain a sure footing upon fashionable ground. Of low origin, and wholly uneducated, but beautiful and clever, she became the wife, from being the mistress, of sir John Lade; and, when the vivacity of her temper did not betray her into her early idiom, assumed the conventional jargon of the rank to which she was elevated, with a versatile quickness and plausibility of which women afford many instances, but men not one. She was singularly bold and expert in riding and driving; and with her hardihood both of skill and manner, and her beauty, bore away the palm from her proud rivals, in the unsophisticated judgment of the crowd on the course. But a mortification awaited her, from which she was not protected even by the roof and presence of the prince of Wales. At a grand ball in the evening at the pavilion, she stood up to take her place in the dance; a murmur of discontent and mutiny pervaded the female ranks; and a male voice, more conveniently than gallantly, called out from the crowd, "Lady Lade's carriage stops the way." On this hint, her ladyship prudently withdrew.

From Brighton the prince went to visit lord Barrymore at Wargrave, where he was entertained with private theatricals, and a prologue written for the occasion by Mr. Blackstone, one of the amateur

performers, and son of the judge. The verses of Mr. Blackstone, never transgressing the most loyal and literal sense, are fair specimens of a lawyer's poetical recreations. Lord Barrymore made amends for his economy of wit, by the prodigality with which he hastened his ruin in dinners, balls, suppers, and assemblages of three hundred people, at Wargrave.

This noted spendthrift had commenced his career so early, and squandered so profusely, that he found himself nearly ruined on coming of age. Of all the prince of Wales's dissolute companions, he seems to have been the most abandoned. On attaining his majority, he entertained the prince at the cost of 10,000*l.*, and was obliged to sell his horses and carriages soon after he had thus signalised his attainment of the age of discretion. He had an extraordinary fund of animal spirits, with some eccentricity. The prince one night, at his instigation, rushed out with a party from the orgies of the pavilion, fantastically dressed in table cloths, with napkins round their heads, and making strange noises, to fright the old women of Brighton out of their senses or their sleep. He played harlequin in a pantomime at the Brighton theatre, — jumping with grotesque activity through a blazing hoop, — and "setting the audience in a roar," by a ridiculous disruption of his motley dress. He exhibited himself, if possible, still more incongruously to the fashionable world of London, dancing a mock minuet at the great room in Saville Row with the clown Delpini. But lord Barrymore's animal spirits were no longer enlivening — his eccentricities no longer

whimsical — when his ruin became apparent. His reception at Carlton House, from being reserved and infrequent, ceased altogether. It was very common to shift the blame of the prince of Wales's irregularities from himself to his associates. The ruin of those among them who had fortunes to lose, might, with more propriety, be charged to their foolish ambition of associating with him. The facility with which he both encouraged and discarded them was a natural consequence, a just punishment, and a useful example. Lord Barrymore's career was soon and fatally terminated. His private theatricals at Wargrave were closed, as it was expressed at Carlton House, "with a finale sung by John Doe and Richard Roe;" his assaults and batteries, which he committed indiscriminately on sir John Lade, Mr. T. C., and his other compeers of the Jockey Club at Newmarket, and on those whom he met in street-brawls, and the low haunts of profligacy, made him avoided by persons of his own condition, and brought him under the notice of the court of King's Bench. He appeared twice before lord Kenyon, the chief justice, — as a party prosecuted for an assault, and as defendant in an action for debt. The action was brought by the architect who had built his private theatre at Wargrave: he pleaded his minority, was answered by proof of a promise to pay after he became of age, and lost both his honour and his cause. Lord Barrymore was an officer in the Berkshire militia. Whilst escorting a party of French prisoners from Rye to Dover, in 1793, he was shot in the head by the accidental discharge of a carbine which he had

with him in his carriage, died in a few minutes, and thus finished, at the early age of twenty-three, his short, dissolute, and foolish life.

The prince of Wales made a tour in the north of England, accompanied by the dukes of York, Bedford, Ancaster, and Queensberry, lords Carlisle, Morpeth, Derby, Holland, and Rawdon, in August, 1789. After receiving the acclamations of the people, and winning a sweepstakes at the York races, he received the freedom of the ancient city from the corporate authorities. The distinguishing incident of this tour was an entertainment given to him by earl Fitzwilliam, at Wentworth House, in a style of old baronial hospitality. Lord Fitzwilliam threw open his gates to the country people, who went through the rustic exercises and diversions peculiar to Yorkshire in the presence of the host and his guests. Whilst the prince, the nobility, and gentry, were entertained within, several thousand yeomen were regaled in the park; and the toasts, communicated to them from the balcony, were sent back with the swelling echo of greater numbers and stronger lungs.

The prince, on his arrival at Carlton House, learned that the duke of Orleans was in London, and put off, in compliment to him, a visit to Mr. Coke at Holkam. This last visit of the duke of Orleans to England was made under peculiar circumstances. The French revolution had commenced its course. Without the influence and wealth of the duke of Orleans, the great movement would, perhaps, not have taken place; but all parties were now anxious to be relieved from his presence. The court ab-

horred him, even before he appeared dangerous. Mirabeau, whose ruined fortunes were repaired by his bounty, was now willing to give him up, because he found him destitute of energy; and Lafayette, who feared and felt his influence in the national guard, was still more desirous to be rid of a rival in popularity. An intimation was conveyed, it was said, by Lafayette, to the duke, that his absence was desirable, and that a passport for England was at his service. The facility with which he submitted brought his personal courage into suspicion, and an emigrant adventurer of the French court, named Tilly, boasted of having treated him with impertinence in the pit of the Opera House here. He was accused of aspiring early to usurp the throne of France as regent or king; but he appears to have wanted the necessary decision, energy, and even ambition, for a project, at the outset of his career, so remote and daring. "I placed," said Mirabeau, "his foot upon the first step of the throne, and he had not the courage to mount it." Others have supposed him actuated by the vengeance of a slighted passion for the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. She treated him with disdain, — the jealous eye of a scorned lover upon her actions, became troublesome, — and she twice procured his exile from Paris and Versailles. Whilst overwhelmed with disappointment and ennui, in the solitude of one of his country houses, he vented his feelings in the following reply to the consolations of his confidential valet de chambre, — "They shall pay for this dearly, though I were to perish for it: yes;

I could die content if I involved the king, and above all the queen, in my ruin; and I will do it, though it cost me my fortune and my life." He came to England either really or under the pretence of being charged with a private mission by the government; and was received not only at Carlton House, but at St. James's and Windsor. After some time, however, his intercourse with the prince of Wales became formal and reserved; and they ultimately parted with a display of court ceremonies, which proved only the absence of friendship or regret.

This alienation was more immediately produced by lord Thurlow. Conscious of his own treachery to Mr. Pitt on the regency question, and therefore his enemy, — or suspecting that the minister but waited his own time to get rid of a faithless colleague, — lord Thurlow laboured, from the first moment of the king's recovery, to secure himself against Pitt, if not to supplant him. He retained the good graces of the prince of Wales, since the affair of the regency; he possessed great influence over the queen; and he thought he had bound the king's religion indissolubly, by the imprecation with which he had devoted himself in the same breath, to "his God" and "his king." Having detached the prince of Wales from the revolutionary contagion of an intimacy with the duke of Orleans, he next reconciled, or brought together, the father and son. A reconciliation between the prince and the queen was more difficult; but this also he effected, with the aid of the dukes of Leeds and Richmond. Confident of his strength, or yielding to his temper, he soon began, from

thwarting Mr. Pitt in the cabinet, to treat his measures with derision in public. Mr. Pitt had the patience to bear "the waywardness" (as it is called by the bishop of Winchester) of lord Thurlow, until he found himself in a condition to dictate his dismissal to George III.; who dismissed his old and sworn servant with the utmost facility, as he had thrown off so many others when they no longer suited him, or their places were more conveniently supplied.

The effect of the prince's reconciliation with the court became apparent, and the great schism which declared itself, at a later period, in the whig party, was already fermenting at the opening of parliament in 1790. The eccentric and awful phenomenon of the French revolution, "with fear of change perplexing monarchs," was hailed in England by numbers, including many active and eloquent spirits, with sympathy and enthusiasm. There is not, in truth, through the entire range of history, a moral spectacle of more grandeur than the first national or constituent assembly of France taking down the whole condemned edifice of society and government, ecclesiastical, political, and municipal; unawed by that which men most fear to touch, error consecrated by time — and re-constituting their system, with fearless talent, on the principles, for the most part, of modern science.

The first sign of the prince's identity with the court was his beginning to hold public levees, on the discontinuance of them by the king, in the spring of 1790; and his receiving persons without distinction of party. He appeared, however, still

disposed to maintain his connection with the whigs, and made an attempt to repair the first breach which took place among them on the 9th of February, when the army estimates came before the house of commons. Mr. Fox had, some days before, taken occasion to lament the excesses of the Parisian populace, but vindicated and eulogised the French revolution, and especially applauded the French soldiers, who, remembering that they were also citizens, refused to become the passive instruments of despotism and the court. Mr. Burke, on the 9th, uttered a prepared and eloquent diatribe against the French revolution, as an instance of "successful fraud and violence—an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, tyrannical democracy." In the course of this speech, however, he alluded, in the highest and kindest terms of respect, to Mr. Fox, declaring that it was agonising to him, as the separation of a limb from his body, to differ publicly with such a friend; but that he did so, rather than appear to countenance "the revolutionary distemper raging in France, which some wicked persons wished to introduce into England." Fox vindicated and repeated his views of the revolution, but in terms of reverential affection for his friend. Sheridan rose and treated Burke as the champion of despotism, with the unqualified bitterness of one who felt secretly stung by Burke's having made no exception in his favour, as in the case of Fox. The friendship of Burke and Fox, more deeply rooted, familiar, and kind, survived this first shock; but Burke formally renounced for ever the friendship of Sheridan. A few days after,

the prince of Wales asked a large party of the whigs, among whom were Burke and Sheridan, to dine at Carlton House, and made overtures to reconcile them in the course of the evening; but without success.

Carlton House, by some unfortunate fatality, entailed perpetual expense and embarrassment on the prince of Wales. The insufficient pittance of 20,000*l.*, voted for "alterations and repairs," in 1787, with an additional grant of 36,000*l.* in 1789, had been expended, but the works were still unfinished, and the tradesmen clamorous for payment. These, and his other creditors, were again so importunate, that they made demands upon him personally in the streets in London and on the Steyne at Brighton. The workmen employed at Carlton House inflicted upon him a mortification which he still more keenly felt, by placing a petition to the king in the hands of Mr. Pitt. Another application to parliament would be made with a bad grace, and, if not sanctioned by the minister, without the hope of success. The duke of York was in similar difficulties, from following the same course of improvident dissipation. Under these circumstances, the desperate resource of a foreign loan was suggested, adopted, and, after much delay, negotiated in Holland, upon a mortgage of the whole revenues of the prince of Wales and dukes of York and Clarence. The duke of Clarence, it was said, joined his brothers in the security, only to facilitate the arrangements. Agents and trustees were appointed, bonds given, and a portion of the loan received. The irregularity with which the

dividends were paid, the troubled state of Europe, and the apprehension that England should soon become a party in the war with France, soon lowered the credit of the bonds, and they were hawked through Holland and France in a state of depreciation and contempt. The transaction having thus become public, the princes were obliged to redeem their securities, and extricated themselves at a considerable loss.*

Henry duke of Cumberland, brother to the king, died this year, leaving behind him a curious collection of musical instruments, and the reputation of being illiterate as a clown.

Some spurious or unsatisfied claimants still remained. The following curious advertisement appeared in the Dutch papers of 1796: — "September 2. Notice. The bearers of shares in the following loans, negotiated by Abraham and Simeon Boas, at the Hague, to wit, &c. 350,000 florins for the three English princes, namely, George prince of Wales, Frederick duke of York, and William Henry duke of Clarence, made in 1789, &c., are entreated to apply before the 1st of September next, from nine in the morning till one in the afternoon, to the notary Corneille van Hornick, at Amsterdam, the notaries Huggen en Tendall, at the Hague, where are deposited, for the purpose of being signed, the respective acts of procuration and qualification upon Messrs. Wills and company, merchants at Amsterdam, appointed to withdraw from the hands of the registrar of the court of Holland the original letters of mortgage in the said negotiations (which letters were removed from the custody of Abraham and Simon Boas, to be there kept), to deposit them with the notary Van Homrich, and to prevent, by this measure, any loss upon the said negotiations, to attend to the concerns of the subscribers, and to promote the payment of their interest, and the reimbursement of their capitals."

His debts once more obliged the prince of Wales to retrench the festivities of Carlton House, and pass his time chiefly between Brighton and Kempshott in Hampshire, which he had taken as a hunting seat. He again applied to the king to extricate him, with assurances of reformation, and the offer to reduce his establishment; but the king was deaf to every offer and entreaty, without the condition upon which his mind was fixed — the prince's consent to be married. The duke of York, equally embarrassed, made the same offers of retrenchment and reform, and, less reluctant to concede the main condition than his elder brother, set out on a marriage tour through Germany, in the beginning of the summer of 1791.

Determined by prudence or his necessities, the prince of Wales had resolved to break up his racing establishment, when a notorious occurrence was the cause of his withdrawing himself precipitately from the turf. For a transaction so much canvassed, it remains singularly obscure. The single and only fact known is, that the prince's horse Escape lost a race, with the odds in his favour, one day, and won his race the very next day, when the odds had turned five to one against him. Two of the horses, belonging to lords Grosvenor and Clermont, which had beaten Escape the first day, were among those beaten by him on the second. Large sums were lost, and the losers clamorously imputed foul play. A jockey named Chifney, who was in the prince's service, and rode Escape both days, was accused openly; whilst a silent, suspicious gloom was ob-

servable, generally, among the more distinguished and honourable frequenters of the race ground. Mr. W. Lake, an officer in the prince's household having the management of his stud, came up to the prince, and said, "I must congratulate your royal highness, but I would give 100 guineas you had not won." The prince was wounded to the quick by this observation, but merely replied, "I did not expect this from you." He then rode up to a group of the principal persons on the course, among whom were the dukes of Bedford and Grafton, lord Grosvenor, lord Clermont, lord George Cavendish, lord Foley, and Mr. Fox, and declared "that if there was any thing wrong the rider should answer for it." The rider's vindication was, "that the prince's horse, on the first day, 'lurched' so much as to make him lose ground on the flat, which he endeavoured to recover on the turn of the ground; but the horse tired so fast that he despaired of winning the race, and therefore, having a general order to that effect from the prince, did not distress the horse where it would have served no good purpose; that the prince asked him, after the loss of this race, whether he thought Escape would have any chance the following day; to which he replied, that Escape would be in better condition next day; that the distance would be longer, and therefore in his favour; that he accordingly advised the prince to take the odds, and that he had himself no bet on the first, and only a bet of twenty guineas on the second day's race." None of the other persons in the immediate case of the horse were known to have any interest depending, and the prince of

Wales was subjected to the degrading imputation of having instructed his jockey to lose the first race, or having resorted to the expedient, if possible still more vile, of getting the grooms out of the way, and giving the horse a pail of water shortly before starting. The prince of Wales had only a few hundred guineas depending, and it is altogether inconceivable that he should descend to the lowest level of human meanness for a sum so paltry. It would imply an incredible want of prudence as well as principle. The matter was referred to the jockey club, and Chifney made affidavits in vindication of his master and himself. It appears from a pamphlet relative to this transaction, published with Chifney's name, several years after, that by the prince's orders he appeared before sir C. Bunbury, and Messrs. Dutton and Panton, stewards of the jockey club, who, by his account, asked him only a question or two respecting his having bets on either day's race. The decision, in this case, was that Chifney should never again ride over the Newmarket course, and that the prince must dismiss him or retire from the turf. He chose the latter, and settled an annuity of 200*l.* a year on the disqualified jockey, observing, on the occasion (if the jockey's pamphlet be worthy of credit), "that they insisted on Chifney's dismissal, only because they thought him too good a rider, and too honest to see his master robbed." His retirement was an advantage, but purchased at the cost of a degrading suspicion, the contact of which, though ever so groundless, leaves a stain. How strong must be the fascination of this pursuit

of horse-racing, when men follow it with the fearful hazard of placing both their fortunes and their characters in the hands, not merely of the jockey who rides, but of the lowest stable-boy who has access to the horses.

The marriage of the duke of York with the princess Frederica Ulrica, eldest daughter of the king of Prussia, was solemnised at Berlin in September, and re-solemnised with the usual forms on their arrival in England, on the 23d of November, 1791. It would appear that the prince of Wales saw his brother's marriage with pleasure, though so reluctant himself to set or follow the example. He received, attended, and gave away the young duchess with engaging gallantry.

The prince of Wales once more sent his racing establishment to be disposed of at Tattersall's early in the spring (1792), and instituted an enquiry into his affairs. A statement of his debts, drawn up by a commission formed of the chief officers of his household, with lord Southampton at its head, was presented to the king, who refused all aid. Nothing remained for him but retrenchment: he accordingly sold his horses of every kind, to the number of 500, and discharged his servants. Carlton House was closed once more, with the exception of a few apartments for occasional residence; and a large proportion of his income was again placed at the disposal of trustees for the payment of his debts.

The failure of Mr. Fox and his party on the regency question would alone have dissolved their connection with the prince of Wales. They were evidently no longer in a condition to repeat the

service which they had rendered him in 1787. The French revolution, and the zealous offices of lord Thurlow, only hastened a schism which would have taken place without them. For some time the prince observed a sort of neutrality between the ministry and opposition — very rarely voting, and never speaking, in the house of lords. On the 31st of May, 1792, he made a speech in his place as a peer of parliament for the first time, and for the purpose of proclaiming that he was now politically opposed to his early friends. It is necessary to retrace briefly the circumstances which not only detached the prince of Wales, but ultimately convulsed and divided the whig party itself.

The English people, judged by the criterion of the general election of 1790, may be divided into those who admired the revolution, and those who looked on with tranquil indifference. Even Mr. Pitt observed a respectful or politic reserve. Burke alone vehemently denounced it from the beginning. The real or pretended opinion of individual partisans, and the senseless echo of the crowd, obtained him credit on this subject for sagacity beyond the common endowment of man; but experience soon proved his judgment truly human in its infirmity and presumption. On his first collision, already mentioned, with Mr. Fox, he described France as "expunged from the map of Europe;" — "a headless, hopeless, nameless corse; *" — when her existence, far from being extinct, was undergoing an extraordinary

——— "Jacet ingens littore truncus,
Avulsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus."
— Quoted in Burke's speech on the army estimates, 1790.

process of regeneration, and receiving new elements of strength and energy. He wildly indulged his passions and his fancy, with little regard to fact or fairness. He described the revolution as an atrocious principle of carnage and devastation, when it was yet attended only by those single instances of excess and crime, which are lamentable and shocking, but inevitable, where a powerful, ancient and insolent despotism is to be overthrown, — and the agents are men. His abandonment of one party, the civil disavowal of him by the other, the melancholy sense of being unsupported and alone, irritated his pride to a phrensy, which, after six months' brooding, vented itself in his celebrated "Reflections on the French Revolution." But though he perverted truth and his earlier principles, it was injustice to accuse him of conscious wrong, and, above all, of sordid motives. His vindication of the ancient order in France has been ascribed to a certain general tendency of his fancy and taste to the gorgeous and melodramatic; but if he was an idolater of royalty, he sometimes stripped his idol most unceremoniously, and exposed it in the weakness of humanity or the deformity of vice. His conduct on the French revolution may have been determined by the mode of his first entrance into public life. He started "on the crutches of patronage *," and may have lost, from habit, the free and independent use of his faculties and principles. It was partly the effect of disappointment; for he was in every sense a disappointed man. "Living in an inverted order," —

* Letter of Mr. Curran to Mr. Ponsonby.

as he mournfully expressed it, in reference to the death of his only son, — disappointed of wealth and power, which he eagerly sought, but of which he never obtained more than a momentary grasp, — he may have become disgusted at last with the ungrateful soil and service of the people. In fine, with the susceptibility and vehemence of his imagination and his impulses, his mind may have received its first bias on the French revolution from some extrinsic, accidental, and unknown cause. His immortal masterpiece of eloquence and advocacy obtained him one gratification — perhaps his own main end; — it roused the nation, and gained him admiring partisans. Forgetting or disregarding his former declarations, that France was fallen, and for ever, down even to the pity of her enemies, he now denounced her as a monstrous power, gigantic alike in her malignity and strength, which he invoked Christian Europe to destroy. That glorious work, the "Reflections," has been charged with rhetorical exaggeration of language and fancy, but by those only who could not appreciate the precision and depth of his metaphysics and ethics, and the redundant force of his diction and imagination.

His vanity, soon after the first promulgation of his opinions, was enlisted against the revolution. France poured into England a swarm of emigrants, composed chiefly of the frivolous and hollow dependants of the French court. They gathered round Burke; overpowered him with a sycophant incense, which he could not resist; and inflamed him with fresh tales of jacobin atrocity. Those friends of the late Mr Curran, who have once heard, must well

remember, his humorous version of a scene between Burke and a newly arrived Hiberno-Gallic priest, relating his miraculous escape from the furies of the revolution, and his own conspiring eagerness to suffer martyrdom for the throne and the altar. George III., who could not tolerate Burke whilst he was a financial reformer and a whig, now told him, in reference to his book, that "he had conferred an obligation on every gentleman in Europe." Thus prepared to discharge fire and flame, he entered on the session of 1791.

Mr. Pitt, in the beginning of this year, proposed to go to war with Russia, in support of the Turks. The ostensible cause of quarrel was the maintenance of the balance of Europe; and the main point in dispute, the occupation by Russia of the fortress of Oczakow. The sense of the nation was decidedly against this quarrel; and the minister was reduced to feeble majorities in parliament. Mr. Grey took the lead on this question, supported by Mr. Fox; and pressed the minister with the vigour and ardour of eloquence and increasing numbers. No great public question could now be discussed without encountering the French revolution. Mr. Fox, in the course of a debate on the Russian armament, as the affair of Oczakow was called, pronounced the new constitution of France "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty that had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country." Burke immediately rose in a state of violent agitation; — it was three in the morning; cries of "Question!" resounded from all parts of the house; and, for the present, he was

compelled to give way, trembling with disappointed rage. Mr. Pitt was forced, by public clamour according to some, by public opinion according to others, to desist, with some humiliation, from a quarrel with Russia. It soon became known, that on this occasion the king spoke so ominously of Mr. Pitt and so favourably of Mr. Fox, as to suggest the possibility of his dismissing the former and making the latter his minister. The king would assuredly have dismissed Pitt with pleasure, could he hope to find an instrument better suited to his personal wishes; but, viewing all the circumstances, and especially the king's habitual system of manœuvring, it can scarcely be supposed that he had any real intention of making the change. His casual expressions, however, whether artful or sincere, excited the hopes of the one party and the fears of the other; and the minister, either directly or indirectly, practised upon the king's feelings by representing Mr. Fox as a republican. Fox, to whom these secret suggestions became known, and who might have discovered them in some insinuations thrown out unworthily by Pitt in parliament, vindicated himself by a manly avowal that he was the willing admirer of republican liberty and virtue, modern and ancient; but convinced, at the same time, that the happiness and glory of England mainly depended on the preservation of her limited monarchy and free constitution.

The question of a constitution for Canada stood for discussion on the 21st of April. Burke had, in the mean time, ruminated over Fox's eulogy on the French constitution, and his own interruption

by the house, until these thoughts sank deeply and rancorously into his heart. It was rumoured that Pitt took advantage of his mood, and stimulated him to attack "the English advocates of revolution and republicanism" in the discussion of the Canada question. Fox called on Burke on the morning of the day; stated to him in confidence the favourable expressions of the king; his hopes of office; the rumour that Mr. Pitt had encouraged him to attack the English friends of the French revolution, in order to prejudice him (Mr. Fox) in the king's mind; and, in conclusion, asked him to put off his intended speech from the Canada discussion to some subsequent occasion. Burke denied any concert with Pitt, yet refused to postpone his speech; and the two friends met and parted amicably — but for the last time.

On the 21st of April, Mr. Pitt moved the recommitment of the Quebec government bill, — such was the title of the bill which was to enact a constitution for Canada. Mr. Sheridan moved its postponement: after a skirmish of outposts, in the course of which Mr. Fox adverted to the insidious whispers of his being a republican, and Mr. Burke disclaimed being instigated by Mr. Pitt, or having any views injurious to Mr. Fox, whom he called his friend, the discussion was put off to the 6th of May. On that day, the house having gone into a committee on the bill, Mr. Burke immediately rose. After a few observations on the immediate and proper subject, he digressed wildly to the rights of man — the unitarians — the clubs of London and Paris — and the hardships of the king of France,

with M. de la Fayette, his chief jailor. A member called him to order, and the chairman drew his attention to the question. Mr. Fox deprecated the call to order in a tone of irony, which proved that he regarded the conduct of Burke as designed to hurt him. Burke resumed, and compared himself to M. Cazales, who could never utter a word without uproar in the national assembly. This allusion to the great royalist champion in France proved how much he was acted upon by a sort of chivalrous vainglory. Several members now successively called Burke and each other to order. A scene of indescribable confusion followed: Pitt and Fox alone were heard at some length. Burke again rose, — controlling his agitation under a tranquil air, — and commencing in a governed and solemn tone which imposed silence; — towards the close of a mournfully eloquent speech, he said that, though it cost him his friends, he would still say, were it his last breath, "Fly from the French revolution!" Fox here whispered to him, "there was a difference of opinion only, but no loss of friends;" — Burke harshly replied, "Yes, there was: he knew the price of his conduct; their friendship was at an end." Fox rose; but so deeply affected, that some moments passed before he could speak; tears trickled down his cheeks; the whole house shared his emotion: he then proceeded to vindicate himself; and alluded to Burke, still as his friend, in a strain of tender, grateful, reverential friendship, of which the eloquence and deep feeling can be traced even in the imperfect remains published as his speeches. Having alluded in a tone of complaint and kindness

to "the severe and injurious terms applied to him by his friend," the latter said, loud enough to be heard, "I do not recollect having used any." Fox, taking advantage of the expression, instantly turned round to him, and said, "My right honourable friend does not recollect them, — from this moment they are obliterated from my mind and memory for ever." This generous overture was rejected, and they left the house of commons that evening with the understanding that they were to be strangers to each other for the rest of their lives. There are some motives of compassion and excuse for Burke; his political disappointments and domestic afflictions, the infirmities of a temper not the happiest, and of advanced age, and his honest, almost delirious, horror of the French revolution. On one occasion, when the house of commons seemed astonished at the whirlwind of his declamation, he suddenly exclaimed with St. Paul, "Most noble Festus, I am not mad, but speak the words of truth and soberness."

The French revolution outran the fancy without conforming with the views of Burke. Royalty in France provoked and precipitated its downfall, as if to verify his predictions. Louis XVI. is said to have had good intentions; if he had, they were fatally thwarted by two prominent traits of his character, — weakness and duplicity. It was some time before his eyes were opened to the great change around him, or his mind freed from the illusions of hereditary and habitual despotism. This unthinking and unhappy king returned one morning in his shooting dress, with the usual court train, from Marly, to behold with idle wonder the fierce po-

pulace of Paris marching in arms upon his palace, and to exclaim, "Ha! this is a sedition!"—"No, sire," said the duc de Liancourt, "it is a revolution." Having become sensible at last that it was a revolution, he "paltered with it in a double sense," by concessions, oaths, and bribery. He is supposed to have lost his sheet anchor by the death of Mirabeau. That gigantic demagogue, in whom the genius of the revolution seemed personified, died at the summit of his glory, on the 2d of April, 1791; but posthumous evidence of his having been bought over by the court consigned his remains to infamy and exhumation. Had he lived, he probably could neither have checked the revolution nor saved Louis XVI. The bribed agent of the Austrian committee would soon have been detected in him. The French, and especially the Parisians, have a peculiar quickness of perception and intelligence; and Mirabeau, the discovered court hireling, would have been shorn of the strength which he exerted as the incorrupt and fearless tribune of the people.

The same popular intelligence and penetration which would detect Mirabeau, had already been exercised upon Louis XVI. After the first few months of the revolution, notwithstanding some momentary bursts of popular feeling in his favour, he ceased to have any hold upon the confidence of either the assembly or the nation. He was brought from Versailles and detained in Paris a captive; but he justified the public distrust of his intentions by his secret flight for the frontier, and the weak perfidy with which, in the formal protest signed and sealed by him, he set up a mental reserv-

ation against his most solemn acts, under the most solemn oaths. Arrested in his flight, and brought back to Paris, he was from that hour but the semblance of a king.

The end of royalty, thus rapidly approaching in France, was regarded by many in England as the consummation of human liberty and happiness; by others, with abhorrence and fear. The new afflictions and humiliations of the king and queen of France inflamed still more the zeal of Burke, and figured as new and brilliant episodes in the successive editions of his celebrated work. The public effect of this treatise was prodigious: it is the property of true eloquence, to achieve universal dominion over mind, from the highest to the lowest class; and Burke communicated a portion of his own fire to the ignorant populace. Of the many replies to him, three only deserve mention. Dr. Priestley replied to him with ability and zeal. Priestley spent his virtuous and useful life chiefly in the pursuit of experimental science, at his residence in the neighbourhood of Birmingham: he was a dissenter in religion, an admirer of the French revolution, an adversary of Burke; and the infuriate rabble of that town, with shouts of "church and king," indulged their Vandal rage by destroying his home, his books, his manuscripts, and his instruments of scientific discovery. Their fury was directed against the life of the philosopher, but he happily escaped.

Sir James (then Mr.) Mackintosh defended the English admirers of the revolution with eloquence, energy, and temper.

The third champion against Burke was Paine, — his rival in enthusiasm and effect. An impartial estimate of this remarkable person has been rarely formed, and still more rarely expressed. He was assuredly one of the original men of the age in which he lived. It has been said, that he owed his success to his vulgarity. No one competent to judge could read a page of his "Rights of Man," without seeing that this is a clumsy misrepresentation. There is a peculiar originality in his style of thought and expression; his diction is not vulgar or illiterate, but nervous, simple, and scientific. Others have said of him with more truth, that he owed his popularity to the hardihood with which he proclaimed and vindicated his errors. Paine, like the young Spartan warrior, went into the field stripped bare to the last shred of prudent and conventional disguise; and thus not only fixed the gaze of men upon his intrepid singularity, but exhibited the vigour of his faculties in full play. His ambition seems to have been that of an eccentric, well-intentioned desperado.

The government, after allowing this great propagator of sedition to range uncontrolled for several months, at last issued a proclamation against seditious writings and correspondences on the 21st of May, 1792. The minister, with a politic forbearance, had allowed the evil to make such progress, as to afford plausible grounds for a proclamation which introduced *espionage* and an arbitrary police, for social confidence and the law of the land. An address of thanks to the king was carried in the house of commons without a division, but not without resistance. Mr. Grey vehemently opposed

it: he was at this time by the side of Mr. Fox, the most active, popular, and eminent member of the whig party, and the acknowledged chief of the reformers. Some revolutionary zealots, for the most part insignificant and conceited visionaries in the suite of Paine, mistaking noise and notoriety for eloquence and celebrity, held meetings on the model of the French clubs, and carried on an interchange of bombastic compliments and fustian declamation with the French national assembly. Mr. Grey, to protect the cause of reform from being compromised by this class, instituted an association entitled "The friends of the people," which contained a most powerful array of talent, wealth, rank, and reputation, for the declared object of effecting a strictly English and constitutional reform in the house of commons. Mr. Pitt, with his sagacity and firmness, could have no fear of the clubbists and correspondents; but he feared the society of "the friends of the people," whose object was to wrest the house of commons out of the hands of an oligarchy; he hated reform with the rancour of an apostate; and one of the main but secret objects of his proclamation was to throw odium on this society, and fill the minds of the weak and wavering with alarm.

The division among the whigs manifested itself in the house of commons on this debate. It was still more marked in the house of lords, where the signal of dissociation already mentioned was given by the prince of Wales. On the 31st of May, the motion for an address having been made and seconded, "the prince of Wales" (says the Parliamentary History) "addressed their lordships for

the first time, in a manly, eloquent, and persuasive manner." This speech of half a page of stately common places against "wild ideas of theory," and "seditious publications," may be found in the "Parliamentary Debates." It concludes with the words,—"I exist by the love, the friendship, and the benevolence of the people, and them I will never forsake as long as I live."

Mr. Fox made sacrifices to prevent the defection which threatened his standard. He checked the zeal of the reformers in the whig club; and withheld his name from the association of "The friends of the people:" — but compromise was now impossible.

The great division of the whigs which joined the minister, is supposed to have been drawn in the wake of Burke. In this, as in many other instances, every thing is referred to the individual, on whom nothing depended, and nothing referred to events, on which every thing depended. Had Burke never spoken or written against the French revolution, this secession would probably have taken place. The seceders were of two descriptions, — the old train of lord North in the coalition, and the members and dependants of the great whig families of Bentinck, Cavendish, Wentworth, and Spencer. The retirement of the former — mere extern auxiliaries, and having moreover a natural affinity to toryism, the court, and the minister, — was to be expected in a great crisis of party and principle; and as to the latter, it is matter of some surprise that they adhered so long and went so far.

The emigrants appealed, entreated, and intrigued (very excusably), in every court of Europe, against

a revolution which had driven them to exile and beggary. On the 24th of August, 1791, the emperor of Germany, the king of Prussia, and the elector of Saxony, conferred secretly at Pilnitz in Lusatia, and agreed to make war upon the revolution. The minor states of Germany were necessarily drawn into the league; and the extremes of Europe — Spain, and Sweden — undertook to join the crusade. In the mean time Louis XVI. signed, sealed, and swore his acceptance of the new French constitution; and the constituent or first national assembly, bequeathing to France and to posterity, in its proceedings, a mass of talent and research, eloquence and sagacity, benevolence, disinterestedness, and courage, unequalled in the annals of legislation, declared its mission terminated. The second, or legislative assembly, still more ardent and democratic, immediately succeeded. It was now difficult to mistake the approaching ruin of Louis XVI. and of his throne. From a false confidence in foreign powers, and the influence of fatal counsels in his court, he discovered more palpably his antipathies and intrigues. There arose a sort of electric repulsion between him and the French people. On the 20th of June, 1792, an insurgent and armed multitude entered his palace for the purpose of extorting his assent to certain decrees of the assembly, and retired after scenes of lawless outrage, but without shedding blood. On the 10th of August, another and still fiercer insurrection poured its armed thousands into the Tuilleries, strewed the palace and its environs with carnage, and extinguished even the semblance of monarchy. The unhappy king, his queen and

his family, were consigned to a dungeon, his deposition was voted, royalty was abolished, the republic was proclaimed, and the terrible convention was installed as the ruling power.

Such was the succession of events in France, when the British parliament was assembled, before its time, on the 13th of December, 1792. The whig noblemen who joined the court were individuals who owed their power in the state, and influence with the people, to birth, rank, parliamentary property, and public and private virtues. They saw, in France, hereditary titles, and royalty itself, swept away by a new race of men and principles. It is not likely that they apprehended the abolition of royalty or nobility in England; but they dreaded and resolved to oppose a reform in the house of commons, which would cast their boroughs out of the scale, and reduce their nobility to its intrinsic force. Their tastes were too fastidious, and their talents too moderate, for the rude strife of a system essentially democratic. Both their principles and their direct interests rendered them more aristocratic than even the tories. Mr. Fox, and his adherents, on the other hand, had the confidence of superior talents, energy, ardour, sympathy with the people, and a fearless reliance on the strength and capability of the British constitution, not only to resist attack, but to receive and bear such improvements as were suggested or demanded by the progress of time and knowledge.

It became a question who were the true whigs, according to the standard of 1688. A strong, perhaps unanswerable, case may be made for the

"Alarmists," as they were denominated. The revolution of 1688 was but a technical modification of the succession, with certain fresh or revived provisions against the encroachments of prerogative, effected by a powerful and enlightened minority; it was a great transaction, directly for the benefit of the confederated whig aristocracy, indirectly for the benefit of the people. The whiggism of 1688 would patronise the people in a sort of clientelage. There was this essential difference between the English revolution of 1688, and the French revolution of 1789, that the former was a vindication of the expressly stipulated and chartered rights of Englishmen, — the latter, of the inherent, inalienable right of every people upon earth, not only to be free, but to be the authors of their freedom. The circle of ancient whiggism may be sufficient for a political sectary; — but nothing great, except the simple deposition of James II., was ever achieved within it. The generous humanity of Mr. Fox never appeared to full advantage, but when he disdained it; — he never appeared to disadvantage, but when he crippled himself to the stature of a mere whig.

CHAP. IX.

1793—1796.

WAR WITH THE REVOLUTION.—MARRIAGE AND SEPARATION OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.

It was not the policy of Mr. Pitt to make war upon the French revolution; but strengthened, perhaps instigated, by his new allies, the alarmists, he yielded to the king's wishes. Parliament stood prorogued to the 6th of January, 1793. It was summoned before its time for the 13th of the preceding December, and the speech from the throne announced the calling out of the militia, which was warranted only in case of actual insurrection, or threatened invasion. The alarm of insurrection was false and groundless, and the French convention, like the national assembly, saw the wisdom of maintaining peace with England. Louis XVI. perished on the scaffold, on the 21st of January, 1793. The democratic principle, in its ascendant and retributive fury, made this unhappy prince expiate, not so much his own offences, as the long account of tyranny and insolence standing against his race, from Hugh Capet down. His execution rendered the revolution odious, and completed the popularity of a war in England. After a diplomatic correspond-

ence, which it would be irrelevant to enter on, and therefore unfair to characterise, and some vigorous but ineffectual attempts of opposition to avert hostilities, the convention anticipated attack by declaring war against the stadtholder of Holland and the king of England, on the 1st of February, 1793. The express cause of quarrel between England and France was the opening of the Scheldt by the French; and on the 25th of February, the duke of York sailed from Sheerness on his unfortunate expedition to Flanders.

The prince of Wales, to remove all doubt of his separation from his old political friends, now took a formal leave of them, in a letter addressed by him, not to Mr. Fox, but to the duke of Portland, whom he still affected to suppose the head of the party. He had, at the same time, frequent conferences at Carlton House with Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas. His pecuniary embarrassments and maturer years, and the absorbing interest of the war in which the nation had just engaged, produced a favourable change in the habits of his life. He passed the summer at Brighton, performing his duties as colonel of the 10th dragoons, which formed part of the force encamped on the Sussex coast. His camp-tent, pitched at the cost of 4,000*l.*, was used chiefly for the purposes of military festivity, over which Mrs. Fitzherbert presided. Touched with the martial spirit of the time, she rode every day in a phaeton and four, or on horseback, before the lines, wearing the uniform of the prince's regiment. The camp-tent, costly and luxurious as it was, became tiresome after it ceased to be novel, and the

prince passed his unengaged evenings at the pavilion, where the society was now more decorous, and the amusements more intellectual. Musical accomplishment was fashionable in the upper classes; and amateur concerts, vocal and instrumental, were the favourite recreations of the prince. The possession of this talent, with the favour of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and a lucky turn of the atmosphere, made the fortune of an individual, who, after a service of many years, was dismissed by George IV. with the reward of a foreign embassy and a peerage. He was invited to take a part in the prince's amateur concerts: on the very first night of his introduction to the Pavilion it rained heavily when the party broke up; a subaltern officer of artillery, he of course had no carriage, was invited to sleep that night under the prince's roof, and became soon after one of his household officers.

The duke of York, proud, inexperienced, and unendowed, left behind him at Dunkirk the bad omen of a failure, and a fine field of artillery. A want of concert prevailed between him and the allied generals Cobourg and Clairfait; he was ill supported by the Dutch, who seemed to think they had no particular concern in the quarrel; and his two campaigns are remembered only for their disasters.

Lord Moira (hitherto lord Rawdon), eminently distinguished as a soldier, a senator, and a gentleman, was among the most attached and confidential friends of the prince of Wales. Returned from a fruitless expedition to the coast of France, and, happily for him, disappointed of any partici-

pation in the sanguinary and servile brigandage of la Vendée, he was appointed to proceed with 10,000 men to the relief of the duke of York. The prince of Wales expressed his earnest desire, and urged a formal application, for the king's leave to accompany and serve under his friend; but his request was denied.

The duke of York, pressed by the republicans, and ill supported by the imperialists, — without decision or resource in emergency, though in his person brave, — set out for England on the 2d of December, leaving his reduced and harassed troops in cantonments between the Yssel and the Rhine, and supposing the campaign at an end. He either grievously miscalculated, or did not calculate at all; the frost set in; the protecting rivers were soon frozen over; Pichegru, the French general, pushed a division of his army across the Meuse upon the ice; and general Walmoden, upon whom devolved the command of the British troops, leaving the deliverance of Holland to fate, reached Bremen, after dreadful hardships, with one of the finest armies that ever left England, reduced by fighting, famine, the inclement season, and disease, to a mere skeleton. The result of the two first campaigns of 1793 and 1794 was most disastrous to the confederacy. Lord Howe's victory of the 1st of June alone sustained the spirit and honour of the British nation.

The convention which now governed France was a power without example in the history of mankind. It cannot be contemplated without a strange mixture of horror and admiration. Agitated and torn within its own bosom by all the furies, —

desolating France with carnage, rapine, and hitherto unimagined cruelties and crimes, — it yet not only maintained its terrible supremacy, but called forth and directed the resources of France with an energy, unity, and sagacity, which confederated Europe could not withstand. The convention invented a new system of government, for which the vocabulary of despotism and the passions afforded no name. It was necessary to invent for it the word "terrorism," which, with its shuddering import, is still an inadequate denomination. The execution of Louis XVI. was followed by that of his ill-fated queen, who bowed her unbroken pride and beauty to the guillotine with a heroism which, could she have imparted it to her husband, might have saved at least their lives. The duke of Orleans underwent the same fate, unpitied and unlamented. Talents, virtues, patriotism, and the love of true liberty, were expiated on the scaffold as treasons. Madame Roland, who united the republican and heroic soul of a Cato with all the delicacy and graces of her sex, was sacrificed by those monsters in human form.

There is something inexplicable in the dominion, as well as monstrous in the cruelties, of him who was at this time the chief of the convention, the tyrant of France, and the terror of Europe — Robespierre. His power was greater, and his proscriptions more sanguinary, than those of Sylla, without the courage, the talents, or the legions of the Roman dictator. The first great blow struck by him was the destruction of the party called Girondists. Educated, speculative, and enthusiastic re-

publicans; confident in their talents and virtues, and restrained by their principles of justice and humanity, they were surprised and crushed by the ferocious, remorseless activity with which the jacobins and Robespierre darted through peril and crime to their proposed ends. Hebert, Chaumette, Clootz, Chabot, and the rest of that obscene and atheist crew, ceased to be useful to Robespierre, and, under pretence of zeal for the supreme Being, he consigned them to the guillotine.* The terrible energy of Danton and his numerous friends alone remained to dispute or share his empire. Danton, in the consciousness of superior genius, despised Robespierre, — who yet destroyed him and his party with a facility which seems magical†, under the pretence of being shocked at the immorality of his private life. Robespierre, the political dictator of France, next aspired to be the apostle and pontiff of a new national religion. A picturesque and imposing melodrame, entitled "*Fête à l'Etre su-*

* One of them named Vincent, whilst in prison, sprang furiously upon a piece of raw meat, and tore it with his teeth, crying, "Why can I not thus tear the flesh of Robespierre?"

† The following curiously prophetic epigram was circulated in Paris on the occasion. It is strange that French gaiety and wit could survive in the midst of horrors, and be exercised on such a subject: —

"Lorsque arrivés au bord du Phlegeton,
Camille-Desmoulins, d'Eglantine, et Danton,
Payerent, pour passer ce fleuve redoutable.
Le nautonnier Caron, citoyen equitable,
A nos trois passagers voulut remettre en mains,
L'excedant de la taxe imposée aux humains,
'Gardes,' lui dit Danton, 'la somme toute entière
Je paye pour Couthon, St. Just, et Robespierre.'"

prème," was got up by David the painter; hymns, not without religious as well as lyric pomp, supplied by Chenier the poet, were set to music by the composer Gossec, and Robespierre officiated on the occasion in his pontifical robes and character. It is a problem, still unsolved in history and human nature, how this man, without talents to command, wealth to corrupt, or courage and an armed force to overawe, reached the summit of power and crime. He seems to have achieved all by the unsociable, cavernous, hypocrisy, with which he masked his projects within his bosom, and the inflexible singleness of purpose with which, — stranger alike to human sympathy and sensual indulgence, — he pursued them.* Robespierre is viewed by some reflecting and impartial men in France, at this day, as an austere fanatic, who took upon him the mission of Spartanising the French people, and, like other fanatics, stripped his heart of all humanity for the good of his fellow-creatures. The measure of his tyranny passed endurance at last, or perhaps approached and alarmed his hitherto obedient slaves and satellites.† These combined, in their desperation, with the few remaining brave and generous spirits of the convention. After a struggle, decided less by the force and courage of his enemies than his own want of decision, Robes-

* His capacity, however, is usually under-rated; his speeches, which he composed elaborately, are characterised by profound art, and not deficient in rhetorical energy; but his graceless and insipid enunciation neutralised their effect.

† Barrère, Tallieu, Barras, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, &c. &c.

pierre fell from the height of his power on the 27th of July, 1794, and humanity breathed free, once more, in France.

Advantage was taken, by the opposition, of this favourable change, to press upon ministers the expediency of negotiating peace; but lord Wellesley (then lord Mornington) demonstrated in parliament that France must necessarily perish of financial inanition: his majesty was thanked for his gracious disposition to prosecute the war: his majesty's faithful allies shifted from themselves upon the people of England the character of principal in the quarrel, and the system of loans and subsidies began.

The alarmists now contributed their strength in the cabinet as well as in parliament. The duke of Portland descended from his high degree of chief of the whig party, to be third secretary of state under Mr. Pitt; earl Spencer became first lord of the admiralty, with universal satisfaction to the public; lord Loughborough succeeded to the chancellorship, in the room of lord Thurlow, who had been removed some time, and who, in his pique, vindicated the English law of treason against the glozing, sanguinary interpretation of the crown lawyers, and some of the judges, with a force and frankness which raised his character.

Earl Fitzwilliam, after filling for a short time the office of president of the council, was sent over, as lord lieutenant, to Ireland. But his administration was soon found too liberal and wise for that unlucky land. Secret influence, that over-ruling, evil principle of the reign and character of George III., came once more into operation, and lord Fitzwilliam

was abruptly recalled. It would appear, from a recent publication, that the chief agent in this intrigue was an Irish bishop, unnamed, but not unknown, who, under the mask of religious zeal, was anxious only for that monopoly of Irish patronage and jobbing in church and state, by which his family has profited more than any other in Ireland. Lord Fitzwilliam asserted, and the country believed, that he left England distinctly authorised by his colleagues to adopt, at his discretion, the measures for which he was recalled. Mr. Pitt, by one of those compromises which derogate from his character, gave an equivocating denial, and the duke of Portland had the weakness to desert his friend. Lord Camden (the present marquis), succeeded as lord lieutenant of Ireland; and if the varieties of death and torture which came under his official eyes do not, after the lapse of more than thirty years, still haunt his imagination and his numbers, he is the most impassive of mankind. The office of secretary at war was conferred on Mr. Wyndham, an unaccountably over-rated man, who affected the eloquence and violence of Burke, without a spark of his genius, or even temperament; who imposed his indiscretions for originality, and whose printed speeches, not revised but written by himself, are chiefly remarkable for elaborate pretension.

The prince of Wales completely transferred his political confidence from Mr. Fox to the duke of Portland, but took no public part in politics since his speech in 1792. An important circumstance occurred in his private, or, more properly, his domestic life, in the summer of this year (1794).

There are some topics which should be passed over as a matter of good taste, if their alleged importance and previous notoriety did not force the mention of them. Lady Jersey, the daughter of an Irish clergyman, and celebrated in her youth as "the beautiful Miss Twysden," shared the intimate society of Mrs. Fitzherbert and the prince of Wales. Her age, for she at this time had grandchildren, and her supposed regard for a poetical lord, whose talent is revived and surpassed in the third generation, precluded the idea of her having any designs upon the prince. But she was clever and aspiring; her beauty, in the autumn of life, was rather changed in style than diminished in degree; her graces, natural and acquired, of mind and manner, which equalled, if they did not exceed, her personal charms, were perfected in the school of the great world and the court; and it was soon proclaimed, by common fame or scandal, that her relations with the prince of Wales were more tender than friendship. The first important consequence was a separation between the prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert. This lady passed the summer at Margate, —not, as usual, at Brighton,—and, on returning to town, gave up her house in Pall Mall. Lady Jersey in the mean time became the most conspicuously distinguished in the festivities of the Pavilion, and the noble lord, her husband, was appointed master of the horse to the prince of Wales.

George III. had a mania both for breaking and making marriages in his family, and succeeded in fully indulging his inclinations at this period. Prince Augustus (duke of Sussex), happening to be at

Rome in 1792, became acquainted there with the family of a Scotch nobleman, lord Dunmore. The result was a mutual and honourable attachment between the prince and lady Augusta Murray, one of lord Dunmore's daughters, — and their marriage. The young prince, after continuing some months longer at Rome, where he was distinguished and endeared by his engaging manners, his cultivated taste in literature and the arts, and his generous courtesy to the last shadow of the house of Stuart in cardinal York, returned with his bride to England. By her desire they were re-married at St. George's, Hanover Square, in December, 1793. The birth of a son, the issue of their marriage, ruffled the fears or the prejudices of the king; and he instituted, in his own name, ecclesiastical proceedings, which terminated in the declaration of both marriages (at Rome and in London) null and void. The issue of lady Augusta and the prince were already cut off from the succession by the royal marriage act. The king, however, was inexorable, though upon a point substantially indifferent to him, and involving the happiness of two persons, of whom one was his son. A separation, in fact as well as law, took place subsequently between lady Augusta Murray and the duke of Sussex — the result, probably, of these harsh proceedings. The coarse remembrances of Doctors' Commons were sufficient to banish the illusions upon which affection and happiness so much depend.

Having forced the state of "single blessedness" upon the duke of Sussex, the king renewed his efforts to impose that of marriage upon the prince

of Wales. The separation between the prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert gave him fresh hopes; but he found his chief auxiliary in his son's increasing embarrassments. The prince's debts now reached the intolerable pressure of half a million, with the slow and ceaseless torture of importunate creditors. The minister and the father were alike deaf to his complaints; his consent to marry was the *sine quâ non* of relief, and, after a few groans, he was racked into compliance with the dire alternative. The king's pertinacity has been ascribed to reasons of state, and a regard for the morals of his son. It seems rather to have been the result of his peculiar constitution of mind — the union of limited faculties with self-will. Perhaps he was deluded by his own experience. He married a woman whom others had provided for him, without compromising his happiness, and he may have reasoned from his own case for his son; but he forgot how much depended upon certain aptitudes and inaptitudes of individual character. The tyrant's bed was a bed of torture, because it did not fit the victim, not because it was of iron.

As the prince's repugnance was general, the selection of a bride wa made without his voice in the matter. His father and mother were not agreed; the former opining for the princess Caroline of Brunswick, his sister's daughter, whilst the latter recommended her own niece, the princess of Mecklenburgh, better known as the late queen of Prussia. George III. had neither the weakness nor the strength of mind which makes a man yield to the wishes of his wife, and he determined the choice.

Lord Southampton was appointed ambassador to solicit the hand of the princess on behalf of his master; but, probably foreseeing the consequences from what he knew of the prince's feelings, and unwilling to take upon him the odium of a prominent share in the ceremony of dragging the prince a reluctant and bound victim to the altar, he declined the honour. Lord Malmsbury was appointed, and set out in the autumn of 1794 with a suitable attendance.

The princess of Brunswick, according to every account which has appeared, was nearly as reluctant as the prince of Wales. She had pledged her affection to a German prince serving on her father's staff, and, consequently, a member of his household. This attachment was disapproved and forbidden by her parents, but the princess, with her frank and decisive character, could not lightly change. One proof of fidelity given by her was refusing the hand of the present king, then prince royal, of Prussia. She, however, had opportunities of personally knowing him, and, consequently, the less merit in rejecting the dullest as well as the most decorous gentleman of his time. The offer of the prince of Wales's hand was more trying: he was presented to her imagination with not only the splendour of his inheritance, but the *éclat* of his personal character. The authority of her parents, joined with the many influences which govern the thoughts and actions of a woman, prevailed over a hopeless passion. Pictures and presents were exchanged; and she gave her hand to lord Malmsbury as the betrothed of the prince of Wales. The messenger who brought over

the princess's picture, was charged with another packet, in compliance with a curious piece of German etiquette. This was a pair of her highness's old shoes, consigned to the bridegroom as a pattern for the bridal pair, which he was to provide. The princess left Brunswick with lord Malmsbury on the 30th of December; and after a circuitous route and some weeks' delay, reached the mouth of the Elbe. Admiral Payne, comptroller of the prince's household, was commissioned to proceed with a squadron to receive and bring over the bride; and lady Jersey, Mrs. St. Leger, and Mrs. Harvey Aston, were appointed ladies in waiting to proceed and meet her with the admiral. If there was any thing improper or unfortunate in the appointment of lady Jersey, the whole responsibility does not rest with the prince. She owed her appointment to queen Charlotte, who, according to the prevailing opinion at the time, was glad to have near the princess a person accomplished and insinuating, devoted to the interests, and willing to gratify the curiosity, or some worse passions, of Buckingham House. This supposition is rendered at least probable by the event.

The princess had been diverted and delayed on her route by the progress of the enemy. Admiral Payne was detained at Sheerness by the elements, and by what was pleasantly called "a mutiny on board." The three ladies in waiting arrived at Sheerness for the purpose of proceeding on their voyage, and the admiral was about to weigh anchor, when lady Jersey objected to the accommodation provided for her, and insisted upon having, during

the voyage out, the cabin and bed destined for the princess. This was refused; the lady ordered the jolly boat to take her ashore; and the gallant admiral sailed without his full complement of ladies in waiting. He sailed up the Elbe, and received the princess on board the Jupiter on the 28th of March, 1795. After being enveloped in fogs for forty-eight hours off the British coast, the princess entered the Thames, went on board a royal yacht, and landed at Greenwich on Sunday, the 5th of April. Her reception by the governor, sir Hugh Palliser; her meeting with lady Jersey, who arrived from London an hour behind her time with a bridal dress, and who superintended her toilet; the desertion of their Sunday devotions by the good people of Greenwich, for the indulgence of their loyalty or curiosity; the princess's triumphal entry into London, escorted by the prince of Wales's 10th regiment of dragoons; may be all passed over, to arrive at the important moment of the first interview with the bridegroom at St. James's. Having reached the palace at three o'clock, she was introduced to her apartments. Lord Malmsbury stood prepared to present the prince; the approach of the bridegroom was announced; he was in the next room; and lord Malmsbury was on the alert to present him, when the princess, anticipating his services, and dispensing with forms, ran to meet her future husband. The gentleman, whether from the vivacity of the lady, or from other causes, was agitated; but soon rallied gallantly, and complimented her on the facility with which she expressed herself in English. The king received her with marked kind-

ness. It was observed that the queen's manner was dry and repulsive.

When the betrothed pair met next day, the prince's behaviour was forced and cold. This has been ascribed to the suggestions of lady Jersey in the mean time; but it may be accounted for as the result of his own reflections during the preceding night; for night, they say, brings counsel. Retreat, however, was cut off, and he led his ill-starred bride to the altar on the evening of the 8th of April, 1795. The ceremonial was in substance the same as on other royal marriages, but the conduct of the bridegroom was different: he manifested the bewildered absence of mind of one who scarce knew what was passing around him, and rose impatiently from his knees before the ceremony was half performed. The archbishop stopped short; the king restored order, and the ceremony proceeded to its close. It has been stated in a variety of publications, that "the good old king," as George III. has been styled for the imposing regularities of his private life, by canting sycophants and the common herd, "shook his son's hand with a force which brought tears into his eyes." If tears came into the eyes of the prince, it is more likely that they flowed from the same cause which produced his agitation at the altar; — from the consciousness of committing a moral, though not a legal, offence; of violating an obligation which he had contracted, under the sanction of the law of honour and the forms of religion; and of being under the eyes of *some* who had also been present at his previous marriage. The positive affirmation of a disputed fact, without giving the proofs, may

be pronounced idle or unwarrantable; but it should be remembered, that the time is not yet come, when the direct evidence of such an event as the secret nuptials of the prince of Wales with Mrs. Fitzherbert could be produced.

The situation of the prince of Wales became truly pitiable: with his character and his habits of self-indulgence, it is not likely that conscience disturbed him long; but the remembrance of Mrs. Fitzherbert jarred upon his enjoyments. She was the only woman to whom he had been really attached. Her manners, temper, knowledge of society, and accomplishments, were strong ties upon one who knew how to appreciate, and was long habituated to them.

Mutual dislike and disunion between a couple so inauspiciously joined was to be expected; but an additional and determining cause has been assigned. Lady Jersey, it was said, insinuated herself into the confidence of the princess of Wales, obtained from her the avowal of her having a previous attachment, betrayed this secret to the prince, and spoke contemptuously of the princess's person and manners. Another cause of alienation, seemingly trivial, but not the less likely to operate with one so vain and flattered as the prince of Wales, has also been mentioned. Hair-powder was falling into general disuse, but was still used profusely by the prince. The princess in an evil hour observed to lady Jersey, that he looked like a serjeant major with his powdered ears; and the faithless confidant, or jealous rival, conveyed to him this indiscreet pleasantry. It would appear, however, that he bore his fate,

and went through the forms of civility, with great fortitude for a considerable time.

His marriage was only one of the prince's afflictions. He had consented to marry upon the express condition of having his debts paid. Even during the interval between the princess's being affianced at Brunswick and her arrival in London, some unpleasant discussions took place on this subject between the father and son. The prince, having consented to give his hand for a consideration, and having performed his part thus far, demanded a corresponding performance of the contract on the other side, by putting the payment of his debts in immediate train. This was refused, and his dissatisfaction was such as to give rise to rumours of his having retracted his pledge. He was, however, too far advanced to retreat; and his embarrassments placed him in a state of duresse, at the mercy of his father.

Mr. Pitt, on the 27th of April, delivered a message from the king, in which "his majesty relies on the liberality and affection of his faithful commons, feels the deepest regret, &c. at the necessity of providing the means of freeing the prince of Wales from incumbrances to a large amount.... but his majesty entertains no idea of proposing to relieve him, otherwise than by the application of part of the income which may be settled on his royal highness..... His majesty (in fine) recommends the establishment of a regular and punctual order of payment, to guard against the possibility of the prince being again involved in so painful and embarrassing a situation." This message was no sooner

read, than colonel Stanley moved the reading of the king's message for the payment of the prince of Wales's debts in 1787. It was accordingly read; the object was, to bring before the house the pledge given by the prince to contract no more debts when he was relieved by parliament in that year. A series of discussions, the most painful and humiliating to the prince, now followed in both houses; and the minister's language and plan were regarded by him, not only as offensive, but as a breach of faith.

The prince's debts were stated by Mr. Pitt as amounting to about 650,000*l.* He proposed that the prince's actual income should be increased by 65,000*l.* a year; that 25,000*l.* a year of this increase should be deducted for the liquidation of his debts: he proposed further to provide, by an act of the legislature, that no arrears in the prince's accounts should go beyond the quarter; that any claims thus in arrear should be forfeited; and that all suits for the recovery of debts due by him should lie only against his officers. The subject was most distasteful to the public, at a moment of unparalleled distress; the slow process of payment excited clamorous dissatisfaction among the creditors; and the minister's expressions of "regret at the necessity of taking the debts into account," with the lofty tone of protection and rebuke in which he treated the prince's personal conduct and imprudence, galled the prince to the quick.

The prince of Wales was supported and vindicated with desultory zeal by a few individuals; but wanted the compact and imposing support of a party on either side. Of his old political friends, some gave

a cold and qualified assent, and others were directly opposed to the payment of his debts. He had provoked this, not only by his defection, but by standing conspicuously aloof from them at a period when every art was employed to fix suspicion and odium upon their motives and characters. Mr. Grey's conduct on this occasion seems never to have been forgotten by the prince of Wales, the regent, or the king. It was part of the tactics of the minister to call those who defended the interests and privileges of the people enemies of the power and dignity of the throne. Mr. Grey professed himself as ready to support the real splendour of the royal family "as any slippery sycophant of a court;" but said he thought there was more true dignity in manifesting a heart alive to the distresses of millions, than in all those trappings which encumber royalty without adorning it. He asked whether the legislature should give an example of encouraging extravagance at a moment when the prevailing fashion of prodigality among people of fortune was rapidly destroying their independence, and making them the tools of the court and the contempt of the people. He knew the refusal to pay his debts would be a severe privation to the prince of Wales; but it would be a just penalty for the past, a useful lesson for the future, and a proper deference to the severe pressure and privations endured by the people. He concluded with declaring that he should oppose any consideration of the prince's debts; and with moving that the addition should be reduced from 65,000*l.* to 40,000*l.* a year. Mr. Fox spoke in support of the larger sum, in a tone

which proved the estrangement between him and the prince. The only bar, he said, to the application in favour of the prince, was the pledge given by him in 1787. The prince's annual income was insufficient. He (Mr. Fox) had always thought so. He knew not who advised the pledge of 1787, and he would have disapproved it: but, once given, it should have been observed. It was matter of surprise to him (Mr. Fox) that the king had not been advised to contribute. Was it for the interest of royalty that monarchs should grow rich as their subjects grew poor? In private families the indiscretion of a son was a misfortune which his family shared. Why should royalty be exempt? In voting for the larger allowance, he wished that a much larger sum should be applied to the payment of the debts; and advised the sale of the prince's life estate in his hereditary revenues. Mr. Grey's amendment was supported by what was then a strong minority — 99 to 260; and the original motion carried.

Sheridan, who was not present at this discussion, made a manly and remarkable speech on the subject in a subsequent stage. After stating that, from political differences, his intimacy with the prince had ceased for some time, he defended him with great zeal. Alluding to the invidious comparisons which were instituted between the private lives of the prince and his father, he directly asserted that, "on the subject of expense, and of keeping solemn pledges to the public, the prince would not suffer by comparison with the king." Here Mr. Pitt called him to order. Mr. Sheridan, however, proceeded to say, that the king, in the early part of his reign,

gave a solemn assurance from the throne that the civil list should not be exceeded; and yet, since that period, the debts of the civil list were paid to an amount which would, at compound interest, make nearly seven millions! He then vindicated himself from the slanderous imputations of having consulted his own interest, or sought to flatter the prince in any advice which he had ever given him; declared "in the face of the house and of the country, that he had never received so much as the present of a horse or a picture from the prince of Wales;" and concluded with proposing that the king and queen should contribute, the one 10,000*l.* the other 5,000*l.* a year; and that the further deficiency should be made good out of sinecure offices and useless places. The proposition was rejected.

Similar debates took place in the house of lords. The conflict of crimination and recrimination between the respective partisans of the father and son was revived. The former reproached the prince with his prodigality and breach of promise: the latter retorted that the king had also violated his public pledge; that, with his private parsimony, he was lavish of the public money; and that both he and the queen, with their economy and wealth, threw the burthen of their son's extravagance upon the people, without contributing a farthing themselves. This war of words, after lasting near two months, was put an end to by two messages from the prince, respectively delivered to both houses, by lord Cholmondeley, his chamberlain, and Mr. Anstruther, his solicitor-general, —

declaring his readiness to leave the question of his establishment wholly in the hands of parliament, and to acquiesce in every arrangement which the wisdom of parliament should direct.

The prince of Wales submitted to the lofty and contemptuous relief afforded him by the minister with all its restrictions: he dismissed his establishment, and laid down his state: this did not protect him from gross and defamatory attacks in newspaper paragraphs and anonymous pamphlets, all in the ministerial interest, and evidently tolerated, if not sanctioned, by the ministry and the court. Courtiers have usually a keen perception of the biases and weaknesses of the royal mind; and their disposition, in this instance, to blacken the character of the prince of Wales, is a strong presumption that George III. saw with pleasure the exposure and exaggeration of his son's follies or vices, as giving by contrast a false relief and lustre to his own character and habits of life.

The proceedings of the commissioners appointed to examine and liquidate the claims on the prince of Wales proved also the source of discontent among the claimants, and uneasiness to the prince. The commissioners were the speaker, the chancellor of the exchequer, the master of the rolls, the accountant general, the chief of the king's household, and the surveyor of woods and forests. They took off systematically, probably with very good reason, ten per cent. from all debts, and rejected altogether some bond claimants for debts of honour and gallantry. Among the last was the celebrated actress, Mrs. Crouch; she presented herself to the commissioners

at the speaker's house, and was requested with great politeness to take a chair and deliver her credentials. The first question asked her by a grave gentleman was, what the consideration had been; the lady, flushed with indignant pride, reproached them with the want of manners and manhood, and trampled the bond with its royal seal and signature beneath her feet. Her friends congratulated her, in the phrase of the national assembly, "on having received the honours of the sitting" at the speaker's house.

The princess of Wales had the credit, and probably with justice, of being shocked and grieved by the licence with which her husband's life and character were canvassed in and out of parliament. Her sympathy, however, must have soon given way to her personal grievances, and the neglect with which he treated her. She accepted the special honours of a grand gala from lady Jersey, about the latter end of May; her suspicions, therefore, could not have been awakened then; but on the 5th of June, she declined that lady's company in her carriage to a drawing-room at Buckingham House, and soon after demanded her removal. The prince not only refused this request, but enforced lady Jersey's attendance upon the princess for the summer at Brighton; — this was harsh tyranny, even supposing the princess's repugnance unjust. It is generally supposed, and has been a thousand times reiterated, that the princess appealed to the king, who interfered "with his characteristic generosity," and caused the dismissal of lady Jersey from the household, though not from the society, of the prince; but of this interference there appears no trace or evidence.

It was, probably, one of the pious frauds of the court, to place the father's character in a state of flattering opposition to that of his son. The manner in which the princess reminds the king, in 1806, of the prince's letter of separation, even suggests a presumption that she had appealed to him for the first time on the occasion of her receiving that letter; but even if she did previously appeal to the king, lady Jersey's dismissal could not have been the result, as it took place at a later period.

Who told the princess that she had a rival in lady Jersey, does not appear. The incessant discharge of squibs in the newspapers may have informed or misinformed her; the insinuations were so palpable that they could not have escaped even her imperfect knowledge of English. Notwithstanding the presence of lady Jersey, however, the prince and princess appeared to keep terms with each other very decorously. The prince introduced some distinguished persons to her at the Pavilion; among them was Sheridan, with his second wife, to whom he was recently married. A reconciliation took place on the occasion between Sheridan and the prince. Another person, presented to her, and introduced as a distinguished and frequent guest at the Pavilion, afterwards figured conspicuously in the history of what may be called, in every sense, her trials. This was sir Sydney Smith, just arrived at Brighton with the *éclat* of his achievements in the Diamond frigate. The stadtholder, who had recently fled from Holland, was also the prince's guest, and afforded amusement by the whimsical incongruity with which he chose his occasions for going to sleep.

The princess commanded a play for his entertainment: in spite of her vivacity and utmost efforts, he slept and snored in the box beside her, and was roused with some difficulty when the curtain fell. A ball having been given in compliment to him at the Castle tavern, he fell asleep whilst eating his supper, and snored so loud as to disturb the harmony of the orchestra and the decorum of the assembly. His Dutch highness was also entertained, if the term in this instance be admissible, with a grand masquerade; and was perplexed by the difficulty of resolving in what dress or character he should attend it. The prince of Wales said he might go as an old woman.

The explosion of a curious intrigue soon put an end to the decent mockery of domestic peace at the Pavilion, and led to the separation of this ill-assorted pair. Dr. Randolph, a clergyman, who had been the princess's English preceptor before she came over, having expressed his intention to set out immediately for Germany, was charged by her at Brighton with a packet of letters to her family: this took place about the middle of August, 1795. The doctor, finding on his arrival with the letters in town, "unpleasant accounts of the state of Mrs. R.'s health*," deferred his journey, and was desired by the princess to return her the packet. He accordingly, by his account, called at Carlton House, asked how the packet should be forwarded to the princess, was referred to the Brighton post coach at the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, and "saw it booked there under cover addressed to lady Jersey at the Pa-

* See his correspondence with lord and lady Jersey.

vilion." It soon appeared that the packet had not reached the princess, who, however, took the matter quietly, until some expressions used by the queen left no doubt of her being acquainted with the contents, which were by no means flattering to her. The princess now insisted that lady Jersey and the doctor should account for the letters. A correspondence on the subject took place between lord and lady Jersey and Dr. Randolph. The doctor's account of his share in the transaction is substantially stated above. The internal evidence of his letters, and his tardiness in giving any explanation, are not in his favour. "The newspapers," says lady Jersey in a letter to him, "being full of accusations of my having opened a letter to or from the princess of Wales; and as I cannot in any way account for what can have given rise to such a story, excepting the loss of those letters with which you were entrusted last summer; I must entreat that you will state the whole transaction, and publish the accounts in the newspapers you may think fit." The doctor not having duly answered this letter, lord Jersey entered the arena, and addressed two epistles to him: in the first, lord Jersey merely demands "a full statement" from the doctor, "in justice to lady Jersey's character;" in the second, he retorts upon the princess an insinuation, that this packet, as well as others addressed to lady Jersey, had been intercepted and opened by the princess herself. "I joined," he says, "the more readily in this enquiry, because, other parcels addressed to lady Jersey not reaching her, it grew to be a serious object of concern to me, to find out to whom it could be an

object of interest to pry into and intercept them." The princess of Wales regarded all the parties as confederates, and the epistolary correspondence as a collusion. The correspondence was published by lord Jersey; and it was said at the time, with some felicity and apparent truth, "that his pamphlet wanted only one thing, which he might have conscientiously supplied, to make it perfectly satisfactory, — his avowal that he knew nothing at all about the matter." The doctor stopped short at the booking-office, Charing Cross, leaving the rest to lady Jersey, who, in her turn, never stirred from Brighton, and threw back the onus upon the doctor. It is said in "The Beaux' Stratagem," that where there are a woman and a priest, there are riddle and mystery. In this case the riddle was never solved and the mystery never cleared up. Lady Jersey stood upon her dignity, and her denial of having ever been reached by the packet; this certainly was not an unfair challenge. The doctor halted in his enquiry at Charing Cross, with a tranquillity quite marvellous under imputations the most degrading. The only fact generally admitted was, that the letters by some means had reached queen Charlotte.

The princess of Wales returned to Carlton House in October; her pregnancy was officially made known in December; and she gave birth to the late princess Charlotte on the 7th of January, 1796. This new object of their common affection did not mitigate the prince's dislike of his wife. He allowed her the most liberal indulgences, consistent with his limited income, and the extinction of his credit, in form, by act of parliament, after it had been reduced to the

lowest ebb, in fact, by himself; but he was so sparing of his company, that the princess remonstrated: her remonstrances only produced greater alienation,—as, it is said, invariably happens between parties so circumstanced. A month passed, during which they rarely met, and never spoke to each other. The princess communicated her grievances and demands to lord and lady Cholmondeley, who transmitted them to the prince. What they were will appear from the following well-known epistle, addressed to her by her husband in reply: —

"Madam,

"As lord Cholmondeley informs me, that you wish I would define, in writing, the terms upon which we are to live, I shall endeavour to explain myself upon that head with as much clearness, and with as much propriety, as the nature of the subject will admit. Our inclinations are not in our power, nor should either of us be held answerable to the other because nature has not made us suitable to each other. Tranquil and comfortable society is, however, in our power; let our intercourse, therefore, be restricted to that, and I will distinctly subscribe to the condition which you required through lady Cholmondeley, that even in the event of any accident happening to my daughter (which I trust Providence in its mercy will avert), I shall not infringe the terms of the restriction by proposing, at any period, a connection of a more particular nature. I shall now finally close this disagreeable correspondence, trusting that, as we have completely explained ourselves to each other, the rest of our lives will be

passed in uninterrupted tranquillity. I am, madam, with great truth, very sincerely yours,

"GEORGE P."

"Windsor Castle, April 30. 1796."

This letter has been, by an overstrained construction, described as "a letter of licence." It merely conveyed, with perfect good breeding, his invincible disgust. The princess, after five days' deliberation, replied with spirit and temper, in the French language, from which it may be presumed that the letter was wholly her own. The first sentence only is material. "The avowal of your conversation with lord Cholmondeley does not astonish or offend me; it only confirms what you have been tacitly insinuating to me for a twelvemonth." The prince's letter is dated April 30th, 1796: they were married April 8th, 1795; and therefore the wish to separate was insinuated in less than a month after their marriage. Separation under such circumstances must have been relief.

Public opinion is a partial tribunal in such a quarrel as that of the prince and princess of Wales. The manly and better feelings of the people were naturally enlisted on the side of the lady. There was, however, one exception to the general voice in her favour,—that of the poets,—if reliance may be placed on one of themselves. Dr. Wolcot, who, perhaps, should rather be called by his pseudonyme, Peter Pindar, says in a private letter written at this period, "I am finishing an ode to that amiable object, the princess of Wales. Not a poet has summoned a muse to be eloquent in her praise. Cowards! I dare. Could one tender line draw a

thorn from the bosom of affliction to alleviate its tortures, I would hunt Parnassus for a month to find it." No resource of authority or influence was left untried to produce a reconciliation. The king declared that his paternal favour depended on his son's return to a sense of his duty. The duke of York, duke of Leeds, lord Moira, and lord Thurlow, passed and re-passed as negotiators between Buckingham House, Windsor, and the Grange in Hampshire, where the prince of Wales now chiefly resided. Negotiation was unavailing. The prince complained in his turn, that the promise to pay his debts, upon the faith of which he had consented to marry, was not honestly performed. The arrangements made, liberated him, he said, from suits at law by his creditors, but not from their reproaches.

The king proposed that the prince and his consort should continue to live under the same roof, within their separate sections of Carlton House, and should be seen together occasionally in public, "*to save appearances.*" This was a natural suggestion from one who consulted appearances as the great regulating standard of his life, and of whom it was said, that his motto should have been "*speciem pro virtute.*" The son, who was nearly as much too careless, as the father was too studious, of this cheap mode of varnishing character for the common eye, and who had stronger feelings, or less power to conceal them, yet made an effort to conform. Whether in pursuance of this arrangement, or, as she asserted, at her own repeated desire, lady Jersey now resigned her place in the household of the princess of Wales.

It should not escape attention, that the imputations upon the conduct of lady Jersey are not here given as true: they have been repeated and reiterated in numberless publications without disguise or scruple, but without proof; and may, therefore, have no other origin than two of the most prevalent things in the world,—scandal and credulity. It should also be taken into account, that among her contemporaries, persons of distinguished character and high rank, who must have been the most competent to judge their value, her social position was not affected by them. All that appears quite certain is the mutual hatred between her and the princess of Wales. The following letter was addressed by lady Jersey to the princess on resigning her appointment:—

"*To her royal highness the Princess of Wales.*

"Madam,

"I seize the earliest opportunity in my power to have the honour of informing your royal highness, that I have this day obtained permission of his royal highness the prince of Wales to resign into his hands the situation of lady of the bedchamber in your royal highness's family; a situation which I had the honour of being appointed to by him, at the same time with the rest of those ladies who comprise your royal highness's household.

"The same duty and attachment which I shall ever be proud of professing for his royal highness, and which induced me to accept that appointment, urged me to obey his commands, in retaining it a long time after the infamous and unjustifiable paragraphs in the public papers rendered it impos-

sible for a person of the rank and station I hold in this country, indeed for any woman possessing the honest pride of an Englishwoman, to submit to hold a station which was to make her the object of a dark and designing calumny. Upon mentioning my earnest request to his royal highness for my instant resignation, he represented to me, that such a step would not only be regarded as a confirmation of every absurd and abominable falsehood, that had been so industriously fabricated for the present purposes, but that it would be further promoting the views of those who had been so wickedly labouring to injure his royal highness in the public mind, and, through him, to degrade the royal family. But the moment is now arrived, when I can with propriety withdraw myself from such persecution and injustice, with the conscious satisfaction of knowing, that, by my silence and forbearance, I have given the strongest proof of my duty to the royal family, and of that respectful attachment and gratitude to his royal highness the prince of Wales, which can never end but with my life.

"I am, madam, with all possible respect, your royal highness's most humble servant, &c. &c."

The prince and princess of Wales, dutifully observing the paternal injunction to save appearances, lived separately under the same roof at Carlton House; were seen together once or twice in the royal drawing room and St. George's Chapel; and that sympathetic abstraction called "the public," which in London, like the Demos of Aristophanes at Athens, takes paramount cognisance of all the

affairs of the world, was "delighted at the happy re-union." This was the utmost limit of the prince's filial and marital complaisance. He could not bring himself to appear in the same box with his consort at the opera, and would not deprive himself of a favourite amusement. Their appearance in different boxes, without even a passing sign of recognition, created suspicions, and "a loyal public" was soon "grieved to find that the reconciliation was not quite as cordial as might be desired."

The princess took a house at the village of Charlton, and made frequent visits to town, attended usually by a train of shouting followers up to the door of Carlton House. This was by no means agreeable to the prince; and as princes have always people about them ready to guess their wishes, the Greenwich stage coachmen received a hint to make the Kent Road so unpleasant, as to render her royal highness's visits to town less frequent. Some of the coachmen were at last convicted of wilful and ruffianly insults to the princess; and the prince of Wales, it should not be omitted, sent a special message of thanks to the person chiefly instrumental in bringing them to justice. The prince at last found the task of "saving appearances" too much for him: a complete and avowed separation took place, and Carlton House was surrendered to his exclusive possession; whilst the princess established herself, first at Charlton, and then at Blackheath, with the infant princess Charlotte. Mr. Pitt, it was said on the occasion, declined interfering, "because he had enough to do already, in negotiating between father and son, without meddling between

man and wife." Lord Thurlow gave it up as "a bad business," with one of his most emphatic oaths; the duchess of Gordon treated the whole affair as "a famous joke," with her hearty Highland laugh; and the king resumed the state of alienation from his son, which seemed so strangely natural to him.

Some may think it an omission that the name of Mrs. Fitzherbert does not appear in the dissensions and separation of the prince and princess of Wales. It was put forth in some of those unscrupulous speculations of ephemeral literature, which exercise the same arbitrary dominion over facts and names; and it has been more recently repeated from them, that the prince of Wales neglected his wife, before their separation, for the society of lady Jersey and Mrs. Fitzherbert. This may possibly be false with regard to both ladies; it is certainly false with reference to the latter. Mrs. Fitzherbert lived in a state of retirement, and avoided meeting the prince for some time before his marriage, and for a considerble period after his entire and irreconcileable separation from the princess. It is true, however, that the prince ultimately renewed his intimacy with Mrs. Fitzherbert; and that this was taken advantage of in the scandalous publications of a person named Jefferys, who had been several years the prince's jeweller.

The pamphlets of Mr. Jefferys were not published until 1806; but as they have reference chiefly to the preceding and earlier periods of the prince of Wales's life, they may be more properly noticed here by anticipation of their date. The chief pamphlet is styled "A Review of the Conduct of the

Prince in his Transactions with the Author,* for more than Twenty Years." Mr. Jefferys was first recommended to the prince of Wales on his coming of age, in 1783. Eager and accommodating, he supplanted the prince's jeweller, Gray, who transacted his business, it would appear, on the supposition of being regularly paid. The halo of royal patronage soon attracted the imitative glittering crowd round Mr. Jefferys; his ambition expanded with his business; and he became member of parliament for Coventry. He appears to have been recognised as a sort of general agent between the prince and every dealer or adventurer in *virtù*, foreign or domestic, who had a costly trinket, curious bauble, or other expensive or fraudulent trifle, to dispose of. For several years, he says, not a day passed without an entry in his books against the prince; whilst his personal attendance was equally constant at Carlton House. The prince, on his marriage, ordered him to provide the jewels intended as nuptial presents for the princess of Wales, the queen, and the princesses; and for these he claimed from the commissioners between 54,000*l.* and 55,000*l.* The commissioners rejected the claim; made a great reduction; and were proceeded against for the whole amount. Three experienced diamond-merchants, examined on the trial for the plaintiff, valued the jewels supplied at

Mr. Jefferys supplied only the raw material, to be worked by a Mr. M——. This is no reflection upon a tradesman, especially at the present day, when so many gentlemen are supposed to exercise the privilege of writing as lords do that of voting — by proxy.

51,000*l.*: three equally experienced and respectable jewellers valued them at 44,000*l.*; and the jury found the plaintiff entitled to 51,000*l.* He was paid in debentures, which his necessities compelled him to sell out at a loss, by his account, of twenty per cent. He became a bankrupt; retired from London; re-appeared as a jeweller again; appealed to the prince, first for patronage, then for relief; received no answer; was again ruined; charged his ruin to his transactions with the prince; alternately prayed relief and threatened exposure; teazed colonel Mac Mahon, lord Moira, and the prince, with his menaces and solicitations; and at last published what he styled his "Review." The only disclosure in this noted pamphlet is the fact, that the prince borrowed two inconsiderable sums of Mr. Jefferys at different times; that one was intended for the service of Mrs. Fitzherbert; and that both were repaid.

Finding that his "Review" was swallowed with avidity, he printed scurrilous declamations, addressed, without the slightest relevancy, and only in the spirit of libellous traffic, to Mrs. Fitzherbert; and exhibited the whole for sale in windows hired for the purpose opposite Carlton House; and in Castle Square, opposite the Pavilion at Brighton. The melancholy part of his story remains to be told. His menaces and entreaties to the prince, and his own efforts to retrieve his fortunes, were unavailing; he was reduced, with his family, to the last extremity of distress. His wife, after becoming deranged, soon died; and he, too, found refuge only in the grave. The ruin of Mr. Jefferys may certainly be traced

to his connection with the prince of Wales; but he was the victim of his own vain ambition and sanguine calculations, buoyed up by the familiarities to which he was admitted whilst he was found useful. There is danger in seeking freedom with princes, even when their power is not commensurate with their passions, and they appear in their most gentle mood. The prince of Wales proved this truth by more examples than that of Mr. Jefferys, both high and low; but the victims, as it happens in most other calamities of life, had to blame themselves.

The prince of Wales, whose establishment as a private gentleman was now reduced to a very low scale, lived henceforth, for several years, in a state of comparative privacy and regularity. The vice of gaming, which, under the circumstances, he could hardly escape, after having been carried to a scarcely credible pitch in private houses, received a serious check. Faro banks were so frequent in high life, that the mansions of the nobility were turned into crowded and common gambling-houses. Two ladies, the one a countess celebrated for her *fêtes champêtres*, the other the sister of a privileged duchess, were informed against for having faro banks in their houses, and convicted each in the penalty of fifty pounds. Lord Kenyon, giving judgment in a petty gambling case, said that a pernicious example was given by the higher to the lower classes; and declared, that if any of those persons who forgot what they owed to their characters, to morals, and to the laws, were duly convicted before him, they should appear in the pillory, though they were among the first ladies in the land. This

terrible menace, from a man who was not to be trifled with, and who was known to entertain a sort of levelling animosity against a class of society to which he was admissible by his station and wealth, but for which he was incapacitated by the incorrigible meanness of his habits and manners, produced consternation in what was called "the host of faro" (Pharaoh); and the rage for gaming in private houses subsided, happily for society and for the prince of Wales.

CHAP. X.

1796—1799.

SECESSION OF THE WHIGS.—THE PRINCE OF WALES RENEWS HIS CONNECTION WITH THEM.—SECOND EXPEDITION OF THE DUKE OF YORK.—NAVAL VICTORIES OF ST. VINCENT, CAMPERDOWN, AND ABOUKIR.—BONAPARTE FIRST CONSUL.

The king appeared secretly afflicted during the disagreements of the prince and princess of Wales. His state of mind, with the usual court policy, was turned to his advantage, as the consequence of a virtuous father's sorrow for the transgressions of a son. If his affliction resulted from this cause, and he had not forgotten his own share in it, self-reproach should have been among his pains; but his grief may be referred, with much more probability, to the change in public affairs and public feeling. The warlike fervour against republicanism had cooled. Alarming encroachments by decried majorities of parliament, on what were hitherto supposed the constitutional rights of Englishmen, strengthened the hands of the minister, but arrayed against him a more powerful body of discontent. An unfavourable harvest produced scarcity and the dread of famine The king, on his way to and from

the house of lords, at the opening of the session 1795–6, was surrounded and assailed by a fierce multitude, with cries of "bread," "peace," "no Pitt," "no king." The excesses of the populace did not rest here: stones were thrown at the king's carriage, and one of the windows was broken by, it was said, the discharge of a bullet from an air-gun. A savage attack was made on his person, with great danger to his life, as he was passing from St. James's Palace to Buckingham House; and the state carriage, on its return empty, was shattered by the mob.

The minister, taking advantage of these outrages, introduced two bills; one "for the safety of the king's person," the other "for the better prevention of seditious assemblies," which substantially took away the right of meeting, and placed liberty and life out of the protection of the known laws of sedition and treason.

Mr. Fox and the opposition having spent the utmost force of their talents upon the minister, his two bills, and his obsequious majorities, without making the slightest impression, retired in a body from the house of commons, whilst the ministerial members cried "Door, door!" in real or affected derision of this piece of stage effect.

The secession of the whigs has been condemned: it certainly failed of its calculated effect upon the nation. The world, it was already known, can dispense with any one individual, and it was now proved that the world can also go on without a particular party. It is by no means certain that Mr. Fox calculated upon a re-action. He may

have considered, and justly, that by continuing to appear in his place he but gave the minister occasion for continued and proved triumphs, at the cost only of time and declamation; and he may also have been disgusted or fatigued with vain strife. Mr. Fox loved literature, nature, and the country; perhaps no one ever joined, like him, the genius of political life with all the resources and tastes which make retirement happy.

London, Westminster, and Middlesex, several counties, large towns, and corporate bodies, petitioned or remonstrated against those bills, the continued suspension of the habeas corpus act, the war, and the ministry. In deference to the wants and wishes of the nation, thus forcibly expressed, a disposition to negotiate was intimated to parliament by a message from the crown.

It is necessary to glance at the change in the state of France which had followed the fall of Robespierre. The convention, with its terrific engines under the name of committees, dissolved itself in 1795, and was succeeded by a new government of two deliberative councils and five executive directors. The new government inherited a portion of the energy of the Jacobins, and the French armies continued victorious. One French general especially attracted the eyes of Europe; it was Bonaparte, who had just commenced his unexampled career of glory, conquest, despotism, and adversity.

The moment was ill chosen to negotiate with an enemy flushed with triumph and presumption. The English ambassador, lord Malmsbury, and the French minister, Lacroix, parted at Paris without

agreeing even upon a basis, and with mutual insinuations of bad faith. It may be observed that the pretensions of both were unreasonable. Lacroix, instead of frankly maintaining for the republic its new boundary of the Rhine, by the right of conquest and compensation, opposed, with idle pedantry, the new municipal constitution of France against the public law of Europe. Lord Malmsbury demanded restitution for the emperor and stadtholder without authority from them, and with such insufficient powers from his own government as to require perpetual reference for fresh instructions. His mission was, in consequence, designated by the Parisians "a mission of bags and couriers." It is now chiefly memorable as having produced a last tirade of eloquent and almost distempered fury against the French revolution from Burke. He had abandoned parliament and public life some time — broken down by political disappointment, domestic affliction, and bodily infirmities — yet is this pamphlet ("Thoughts on a Regicide Peace") written with all the fire and vigour of his best days; but, like his other productions on the same subject, it contains much less of wisdom and firmness than of passion and desperation. He reproaches Pitt with pusillanimity, because it appeared, from his consenting to negotiate, that he had not made up his mind "to defend the social edifice of the civilised world, or bury himself under the ruins." Burke died in a few months after the publication.* His will, written by himself, is an interesting and redeeming document. There is no situation in which the real

July 8. 1797.

man shows himself so truly as when he is communing with death; and here Burke indulges only his affections and his sorrows.

The aspect of public affairs, at the commencement of the year 1797, was gloomy and portentous: great and combined naval preparations were going on in the ports of France, Spain, and Holland, for the invasion both of England and Ireland. The approach of an invading enemy would excite, not dishearten, a brave, powerful, and patriotic nation. The depression of the British people proceeded only from the domestic circumstances of the country. Taxes were accumulating, distress prevailed, credit trembled to its basis, the bank of England stopped payment, and would have crumbled, if it had not been sustained by the memorable and misnamed "restriction act." Ireland was on the eve of civil war. Those who had hitherto supported the administration, began to think that the country could be saved only by a change of counsels. The king, in spite of fortune and experience, still clung to his system, and, without any personal attachment to Mr. Pitt, was reluctant to part with a minister whom he had found both a powerful and a complying instrument of his policy and passions.

An attempt was made, under the auspices of the prince of Wales, to compose a ministry from which both Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox should be excluded, with lord Moira at its head. The prince, who was present at "the St. Patrick's dinner," with the dukes of York and Clarence, and a conspicuous train of his friends, took occasion in the course of the

evening to pronounce a high eulogy on lord Moira, the chairman, "as one equally fit to serve his country in the field and in the cabinet." This was considered a public declaration from his own lips, of the interest which he took in the success of the ministerial arrangements then pending. Mr. Fox expressed his readiness to retire, in order to facilitate them; but his friends refused to become members of any ministry based upon his exclusion, and the project failed.

In the mean time the French directory proposed to invade both the British isles simultaneously, with a combined force of seventy sail of the line, ready equipped for sea in the ports of the Texel, Brest, and Carthagena. Admiral Duncan was ordered to watch the movements of the Dutch fleet in the Texel, lord Bridport to blockade Brest, and admiral Jervis to look out for the Spanish fleet. Europe awaited in deep suspense the momentous issue. Admiral Jervis was cruizing off the coast of Portugal in the beginning of February: the Spanish admiral, Cordova, put to sea with twenty-seven sail of the line and ten frigates, secure of victory with his superior force, and directed his course towards the coast of Portugal. The English admiral, having been reinforced by five ships of the line, met him half-way off Cape St. Vincent. Both fleets were confronted, on the 14th of February, at the break of day. Admiral Jervis bore down upon the Spaniards with all sail; broke their line; cut off nine ships; fell with all his force upon those nearest the centre before they could be relieved; was seconded with admirable valour by commodore

Nelson; and obtained a victory as useful as it was brilliant and complete. Thus the same principle of breaking the enemy's line, and paralysing a portion of his force, obtained admiral Jervis the victory of Cape St. Vincent, and Bonaparte those of Castiglione and Montenotte. Jervis was created lord St. Vincent, and Nelson promoted.

France had still the Texel and Brest fleets. Fortune, or rather an unforeseen event, in which the French had no share, though such an opinion prevailed at the time, promised them much more decisive aid. A dangerous mutiny broke out in the British fleet at Plymouth, Portsmouth, and still more desperately at the Nore. Admiral Duncan, a brave veteran beloved in the navy, was deserted by all but his own ship's crew, his courage, and his presence of mind.* He continued, with his single ship, to make the usual signals, as if in command of a squadron, and the Texel fleet did not venture out. The mutiny was suppressed; Parker, the ringleader at the Nore, and a few others, were executed; subordination was restored; and Duncan was again in command of a fleet. Admiral de Winter, a brave and experienced officer, and an ardent republican, received orders from the government of Holland, now called the Batavian republic, to put to sea and engage the enemy. He accordingly came out of the Texel with fifteen sail of the line and ten frigates. Admiral Duncan, who was refitting in Yarmouth Roads, on being apprised of the enemy's movements, put to sea with sixteen sail of

* His address to his ship's crew is a masterpiece of frank and simple eloquence. — See *An. Reg.*

the line; and at eight in the morning of the 11th of October the two squadrons prepared for action off the coast of Holland, between Egmont and Camperdown. De Winter, whose lighter vessels drew less water, manœuvred to keep near the shore. Duncan penetrated his intention; and, by an experiment of unprecedented boldness, broke through his line to get between him and the land. The battle now began ship to ship, and was fought for several hours with desperate valour on both sides, until the Dutch vice-admiral struck to admiral Onslow. De Winter, his ship La Liberté having become a mere wreck, two thirds of his crew *hors de combat*, and being himself wounded dangerously, struck to Duncan's ship the Venerable. The Batavian fleet, with the exception of a few ships which got back to the Texel in a shattered state, was either destroyed or captured. This most important victory extinguished the chances of invasion. The admiral was created viscount Duncan of Camperdown, and De Winter was treated, as a prisoner in England, with all the respect and honour due to his gallantry and misfortune.

Not the least gratifying effect of the victory of Camperdown was its avenging the duplicity with which the directory acted in a second negotiation confided to lord Malmsbury. This negotiation was a reluctant and mortifying concession made by Mr. Pitt and lord Grenville (foreign secretary) to the state of public affairs at home already glanced at, and to the still more powerful influence of subsequent events abroad. The king of Prussia, who had been the first to encounter the revolution with fire, sword,

and the manifesto of the duke of Brunswick, soon degenerated to an English subsidiary; and then, adding perfidy to meanness, made terms for himself. Paul, with his capricious and cruel imbecility, had succeeded to the throne of Russia, and abandoned his mother's tardy but formidable armament. His catholic majesty became the ally of the unanointed republic; and the emperor of Germany was engaged in those negotiations with Bonaparte, which ended in the treaty of Campo Formio. The king of England and his ministry remained the only champions of social order and the cause of kings. Under these circumstances, lord Grenville made an overture to the French government for a general congress; a strange proposal, at a moment when all his majesty's faithful allies had abandoned him, except the stadtholder, who, without a foot of territory left, was living in England. It was probably employed as a gentle descent for the minister's pride, to the humiliation of making the first overture for a separate peace. The directory of course rejected it, and proposed Lille as the place of meeting for the negotiation of a separate treaty.

Lord Malmsbury proceeded to Lille in the summer of 1797, to meet Letourneur, an ex-director, Pleville, an insignificant person, and Maret, since duke of Bassano, a moderate and able man, who had been in England, and was known to Mr. Pitt. The negotiations proceeded, and the diplomatists on both sides appeared frankly disposed to agree; but the French directors interposed delay, under pretence of concerting with their allies, the Batavian republic and king of Spain. Their real object was

to await the issue of the *coup d'état* which they were then preparing, and which ended in the revolution of the 15th Fructidor (4th of September). Having extinguished all opposition in the two councils, and arbitrarily banished the most formidable of their opponents, they were now invested with despotic power. This, and not peace, was their object. They sent new negotiators to Lille, with new and inadmissible demands; and lord Malmsbury very properly broke off the negotiations.

During these successive moments of public depression, peril, and exultation in England, the prince of Wales was impatient of the state of nullity to which he was reduced. He was deprived of the splendour and influence of his rank as heir-apparent, — without weight in politics, and invested with no higher military commission than that of colonel of a regiment. Upon the failure of the attempt to form a ministry with lord Moira at its head, he renewed his intimacy with the whigs. The dukes of Norfolk, Bedford, and Devonshire, Mr. Fox, and other leading members of the party, dined once more at Carlton House. This reconciliation on his part seems to have been a sort of forlorn hope; or, perhaps, finding that nothing was to be obtained from the king or the minister, he affected to be once more the head of a party, from vanity or *ennui*. It was said that he solicited the chief government of Ireland, and, with lord Moira as commander of the forces, pledged himself to restore tranquillity to that country. His application, if he really made it, was not entertained seriously for a moment by the king; and the prince himself must

have known his father too well, to expect that he would bear his son and successor so "near the throne." His solicitations for promotion in the army were more earnest and persevering.

The battles of St. Vincent and Camperdown had destroyed or disorganised the preparations of the directory for invading England in 1797. But no sooner did that vertiginous government find itself relieved from war with the emperor by the treaty of Campo Formio, than it placed the, so called, "army of England" under the command of Bonaparte. The British nation immediately presented once more the spectacle of a people armed *en masse*, by voluntary conscription. The prince of Wales had, by his personal assiduity and skill, brought his regiment to a superior and admired state of discipline; his spirit, under the excitement of popular applause and the sense of wrong, struggled violently within the limits of the subordinate rank to which he was condemned; and, after several applications to the government, he addressed directly to the king the following earnest and eloquent letter:—

"Carlton House, April 25. 1798.

"SIR,

"I have, from various considerations of duty and respect, delayed to the latest hour obtruding myself by a direct application to your majesty; and it is now with an earnestness that I never before ventured to approach you, sir, that I presume to throw myself at your feet, and to implore your gracious attention to the humble sentiments I offer in this letter.

"The serious and awful crisis in which this country now stands, calls for the united efforts of every British arm in the defence of all that can be dear to Englishmen; and it is with glowing pride that I behold the prevalence of this sentiment through every part of your majesty's kingdom.

"Whatever may some time back have been your majesty's objections to my being in the way of actual service, yet at a crisis like this, unexampled in our history, when every subject in the realm is eagerly seeking for and has his post assigned him, those objections will, I humbly trust, yield to the pressure of the times, and your majesty will be graciously pleased to call me forth to a station wherein I may prove myself worthy of the confidence of my country, and of the high rank I hold in it, by staking my life in its defence;—death would be preferable to being marked as the *only man* that was not suffered to come forth on such an occasion.

"Should it be my fate to fall in so glorious a contest, no injury could arise to the line of succession, on account of the number happily remaining of your majesty's children. At the same time, were there fifty princes, or were I the single one, it would, in my humble judgment, be equally incumbent on them, or me, to stand foremost in the ranks of danger at so decisive a period as the present.

"I am the more induced to confide that your majesty's goodness will comply with this humble petition, from the conviction I feel, that, had similar circumstances prevailed in the reign of the late

king, when your majesty was prince of Wales, you would have panted, sir, for the opportunity I now so earnestly covet. I know your majesty, and am fixed in this belief; and I should hold myself unworthy of my descent and station, if a tamer impulse could now possess me; still more to justify this confidence, allow me to recall to your majesty's recollection the expressions you were graciously pleased to use, when I solicited foreign service upon my first coming into the army. They were, sir, that your majesty did not then see the opportunity for it; but that if any thing was to arise at home, I ought to be one of the *first* and *foremost*.

"My character with the nation, my honour, my future fame and prospects in life, are now all at stake. I therefore supplicate your majesty to afford me those means for their preservation, which affection for my country and devotion to my sovereign would have prompted me to solicit, even though my birth and station had not rendered it my duty to claim them. I presume in no respect to prescribe to your majesty the mode of being employed: what I humbly, but most earnestly, solicit, is the certainty of active service, in such a character as to your majesty shall seem fit.

"With the profoundest humility, I have the honour to subscribe myself, your majesty's most dutiful and most affectionate son and subject,

"GEORGE P."

This letter may have been revised or written by some one in the confidence of the prince of Wales; but as it has never been published, and

was not designed for the public or for effect, it may be received as the fair expression of his feelings. The king replied to it by a peremptory refusal, declaring "that military command was incompatible with the situation of prince of Wales;" —a maxim of government which, whether good or evil, is coëval only with the house of Brunswick, and contrary to the practice of former dynasties.

No solid advantage accrued to the prince from his return to the whigs. They rarely appeared in parliament. All opposition vanished in the house of commons. What were now called debates seldom exceeded the tone of conversation across the table.

The celebration of Mr. Fox's birthday at the Crown and Anchor, early in the year 1798, was distinguished by the duke of Norfolk's memorable toast. The duke was in the chair, and, at the close of a speech, called upon the assembly to join him in drinking "The sovereignty of the people." This obnoxious toast, and the clamorous cheering with which it was received, proved so offensive to the king, that the duke in a few days was removed from the lieutenancy of the west riding of Yorkshire, and the colonelcy of the west York regiment of militia. Mr. Fox, presiding at the next meeting of the whig club, eulogised the duke of Norfolk, and repeated his toast. On the following 9th of May, the king called for the council book, and erased Mr. Fox's name from the list of privy counsellors with his own hand.

A man of superior mind, or a king of good sense and real prudence, would have silenced at that moment party feeling and his own passions. The duke of Norfolk and Mr. Fox, with their friends and their party, were as ready to oppose an invading enemy, heart and hand, as George III. Nothing but extreme toryism, or a tyrannical will, could have made him in such a crisis, vent his impotent prerogative upon two of the most illustrious names in England, for proposing a toast which, in principle, was the basis of his right to the crown.

Toulon and Brest resounded with naval preparation, the invading force was equipped for sea, and Bonaparte was to give the law in London. The English ministry did not doubt for a moment that the armament was destined for England or Ireland; and lord St. Vincent, who commanded in the Mediterranean, disposed his cruizers with a view to an intended invasion.

Bonaparte set sail from Toulon on the 19th of May, found the Mediterranean cleared of English cruizers by the false alarm so successfully given, took Malta in passing, and effected a landing in Egypt, not far from Alexandria, on the 2d of July, at one o'clock in the morning. With only 4000 men landed, and without cavalry, he advanced at four o'clock upon Alexandria, and carried it by assault. An event soon took place, which seemed to cut him off from reinforcement or escape, and seal his ruin. He directed admiral Brueys to enter the port of Alexandria, or return to Corfu immediately after landing the troops: the admiral

thought it more expedient to take his station in the bay of Aboukir, where he judged his position beyond the reach of attack, and neglected the easy precaution of sinking vessels to prevent the turning of his line. Nelson, in the mean time, had been despatched after him by lord St. Vincent. On the 1st of August he descried the Pharos of Alexandria, and, soon after, the enemy's fleet. The hardihood of his plan of attack is one of the noblest inspirations of the genius of war: he turned the head of the enemy's line, and placed him between two fires, so as to be compelled to fight at a disadvantage in point of numbers. The contest was dreadful; at midnight the British ships manœuvred freely, and were within pistol-shot, whilst the French ships were dismasted and ungovernable. The French vice-admiral's ship l'Orient took fire, and blew up with a terrific explosion; by which the valour of the combatants was for a moment chained, and a terribly sublime glimpse given of the carnage and confusion of the battle, the bay of Aboukir, and the bosom of the Nile. The French admiral was killed, and Nelson gained the victory of Aboukir, which changed the destiny of Europe, and obtained him the title of lord Nelson. The divan, which had looked on with seeming tranquillity before the battle of Aboukir, now declared furious war against the infidel republic. The emperor Paul was determined, by English subsidies and his own caprices, to pour his hordes into the south of Europe, under the command of Suwarrow. Austria renounced the treaty of Campo Formio,

broke off the lingering congress of Radstadt, and resumed hostilities.

Fortune changed sides, and the French armies of Germany and Italy were forced to fall back upon the Rhine and the Alps. The English minister thought the moment favourable for a decisive blow, and resolved upon bringing the military as well as naval strength of England into play. By a treaty with the emperor Paul, 17,000 Russians were received into British pay, for the purpose of a joint expedition with 30,000 British troops "to deliver Holland." An English squadron under admiral Mitchell was ordered to co-operate, and the command-in-chief was given to the duke of York. The Helder in North Holland was selected for the point of embarkation and attack. On the 13th of August, admiral Mitchell sailed with sir Ralph Abercrombie and the first British division of the expeditionary army on board; but, from contrary winds, did not effect the landing of the troops until the 27th: admiral Mitchell next entered the Texel, and summoned the Dutch fleet to surrender. The crews, mutinying against their officers, hoisted the stadtholder's flag; and the Dutch fleet was surrendered, an easy conquest, to the English admiral.

The great difficulty of this expedition was to make a combined attack. How were two forces, separated by the vast space between the shores of England and Livonia, to be brought to bear at the same time upon the shores of Holland? It would appear that the English ministry did not attempt to compass even the probabilities of coincidence. Sir Home

Popham did not sail for Revel, to receive on board the Russian auxiliaries, until the middle of July; and sir Ralph Abercrombie sailed from the Downs in the beginning of August: by an error still more palpable, the first division only sailed under Abercrombie, whilst the duke of York, commander-in-chief, remained in England with the rest of the army, until news of the first embarcation should arrive. Abercrombie repulsed the Dutch or Gallo-Batavian general Daendels, advanced with circumspection, dislodged the enemy from a strong position called the Zyp, and entrenched himself there. The English general, who was equally distinguished for his intrepidity, sagacity, and experience, has been criticised by military men on the Continent, for not advancing more rapidly, on the general principle of a war of invasion: but he, doubtless, had peremptory orders to wait the landing of the duke of York with the Russian, and remaining English, divisions. The French general-in-chief, Brune, in the mean time concentrated his forces, and resolved to act upon the offensive before the arrival of the duke of York: he attacked Abercrombie in his fortified post on the 8th of September; was repulsed, with the loss of 2000 men, after a gallant and determined conflict; and took up his position on the defensive at Alkmaer. Were Abercrombie re-inforced, or sufficiently strong, and free to advance, the expedition might have succeeded. The duke of York, with the Russian corps and second English division, did not reach the Helder till the 12th; and embarked so slowly, that the troops were not

in line till the 18th. He resolved, however, to attack the enemy on the 19th. The attack was made without concert or unity: the Russians advanced two hours before or the English two hours behind their time, from a misunderstanding with which the allied commanders mutually reproached each other.* The British columns had the advantage of those opposed to them; but the Russian division, from its premature advance, was cut up dreadfully. An English brigade under general Manners was sent to support the Russians, who could not be rallied: the English were repulsed; Brune brought up his reserve; and the consequence of this battle or affair of Bergen, so called from a town near the scene of action, was, that both armies re-occupied their previous ground, with the loss of 3000 men to Brune, and between 4000 and 5000 men to the invading army. The dispositions of the duke of York have been condemned as essentially vicious: he acted upon the trite principle of outflanking, instead of bearing with his utmost force upon the central and vital point of the enemy's line between Alkmaer and the sea: an opening there would have led the way to Haarlem and Leyden, and thus relieved him from the local disadvantages of the point chosen for embarcation. After twelve days' inaction on both sides, during which the duke of York presented the military anomaly of an invading superior force

* "Our allies," says the Russian general Essen in his despatch to the emperor Paul, "intended to attack at the same time, but from some causes unknown to me, were two hours too late."

blocked in by inferior numbers, he resumed the offensive; drove the enemy from Egmont back upon Buverwyck; and asserted the honours of the day by bivouacking on the field of battle. Two incidents in this affair should not be passed over: — Essen, now commander of the Russians, Hermon having been made prisoner, declined, with questionable prudence, to attack an important post until he should be supported; and lord Paget, the present marquis of Anglesey, re-captured, by a brilliant charge of 800 horse at full gallop, the artillery of a British division, just taken by the well known general Vandamme. This action was fought on the 2d of October. The duke advanced full of confidence, attacked the enemy at Kastricum on the 6th, and met with a reverse: by a somewhat violent transition of judgment, he now thought the campaign hopeless, fell back upon his former position of the Zyp, wrote home for instructions, and found himself so pressed, that, without waiting the return of his courier, he entered into a convention with Brune for the evacuation of Holland; leaving behind him not only all that he had lost to the enemy, but all that he had taken from them, and contracting for the unconditional release of 8000 prisoners, French and Batavian, including admiral de Winter.

Such was the disastrous, and still more disgraceful, issue of an expedition, which, according to the language of the British envoy to the emperor Paul, was to achieve "the greatest things in the good cause," — no less than conquering Holland in passing, attacking the French on the Meuse and the Rhine,

and making war on the northern frontier of the republic. Mr. Pitt was an incompetent war minister. Launched into politics on leaving the university, his knowledge went no farther than the ancient classics, finance, and the popular materials of parliamentary debate; he knew nothing of the language, manners, mind, or actual state of any nation of the Continent; but his great error in this instance, was giving the command to the duke of York, who had already proved himself destitute of the sagacity to calculate, and the energy to take advantage of, the hazards of war. The British nation was indignant at this humiliating result; though, beyond the actual cost of life and honour, it was neutralised by the incapacity and profligacy of the French government. Tyranny, insolence, rapine, and peculation, soon put an end, not only to the power of the directory, but to the institution itself. This great incident of the year 1799, though appertaining to the history of another nation, has yet exercised an influence so permanent and direct on the affairs of England, that it properly forms part of the subject-matter of these pages.

The stirrings of ambition are said to have been first felt by Bonaparte on his return to Paris, after he had made the conquest of Italy and concluded the treaty of Campo Formio. Hitherto a heroic love of peril and glory was his ruling passion. In Paris he found himself a popular idol, and the government in discredit. The directory gave him a triumphal entertainment in the gallery of the Louvre; during which it was observed he ate nothing, spoke little, and smiled but once — on see-

ing before him a model of the passage of the bridge of Lodi executed in pastry. On his way to the banquet he was accosted by a deputation of the market-women called "dames de la Halle," who presented him with a bouquet. "You would," said he, "do as much for a king to-morrow, if you were given one." His studious retirement, and assumption of the modest guise of a member of the Institute, did not protect him from the importunate and admiring curiosity of the multitude, and the suspicious jealousy of the directory. He asked and easily obtained the command of the expedition to Egypt. The project was his own; it haunted his imagination in the midst of his cares in Italy. The mathematican Monge, who accompanied him in his Italian campaign, and whom he charged with presenting to the directory colours taken from the enemy, took occasion, in a formal harangue, to talk of "the glory of regenerating Egypt, the cradle of civilisation." The professed and more immediate motives of the expedition were to conquer and colonise Egypt, and penetrate to the British empire in India. But Bonaparte is said to have been personally actuated by his fear of being unemployed and eclipsed, his love of *éclat* and the gigantic, and the vision of erecting a new empire for himself in the east. The battle of Aboukir, desperate as it seemed to make his situation, did not materially affect his courage. Pompey's pillar, the pyramids, "the city of Alexander," the interests of science and civilisation, the example of the Roman legions, figured in his bulletins. He conquered the Mame-

lukes, the Arabs, the Turks, fanaticism, the plague, and, in short, all opposition but that of the strong place of Acre, which a gallant Englishman and "Christian knight" defended against "a false renegado."* The victory of Aboukir, with the more recent blockade of Malta and capture of Corfu, cut off reinforcement, and dispelled the chimera of penetrating to India. The virtuosi and philosophers who accompanied him were disappointed in the monuments of ancient arts, science, and civilisation; the face of nature and the state of the people discouraged the designs of colonising; news of the state of the French armies, and of opinion, parties, and the government in France arrived; and the ambition of Bonaparte turned to another and grander field. He embarked for France on the evening of the 22d of August, leaving the command-in-chief to Kleber; escaped the English cruizers with the good fortune which followed him so long; and landed in France, at Frejus, on the 1st of October. Arrived in Paris, he found the government decried, the terrible jacobins stirring into life, moderate men in alarm, and the aspiring factions each ready to court an alliance with him. He flattered them all with hopes, but came into terms only with that great constitution maker, the abbé Sieyes. Private meetings were held, in which Bonaparte not only directed the military arrangements for striking a *coup d'état*, but discussed with Sieyes the plan of a new government. The directory, the deliberative coun-

* See sir Sidney Smith's quixotic address to the Christians of Mount Lebanon.

cils, and the constitution, vanished before usurpation and the bayonet on the 18th Brumaire (Nov. 9th) and Bonaparte began, under the name of the Consulate, that splendid edifice of military despotism and universal conquest, the destruction of which has covered the British arms and the reign of George IV. with glory.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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